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NARRATIVE LOGIC

A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language

by **F.R. ANKERSMIT**

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To
WILLIAM HENRY WALSH
whose ideas ‘colligate’ the
essentials of this book

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INTRODUCTION

I shall now give a rough outline of the main argument of the book. In Chapter I a number of preliminary questions are discussed: a logical approach to the narratio is preferred to a psychologistical one, the narratio is defined and delimited from all other narrative *genres* by contrasting it with the nearest *genre* available, i.e. the historical novel.

Chapter II is a *demolir pour mieux bâtir.* The merits and shortcomings of existing investigations of the narratio are enumerated: it is made clear that a different approach will be necessary.

In Chapter III it is claimed that the problem of the narratio is a genuine one: the problems inherent in the narratio cannot be reduced to problems concerning statements. Consequently, the concepts "truth and/or falsity of narrations" can be shown to be meaningless.

In Chapter IV the first steps towards a narrativist philosophy are made. In this Chapter the case of "narrative realism" is defended: in none of the accepted meanings of these terms can the narratio be said to be a "picture" or "image" of the past. This thesis is the first of the three essential pillars that support the narrativist building constructed here. Narrative idealism claims the autonomy of the narratio: in the narratio the past is described in terms of entities that do not refer to things in, or aspects of the past. The construction and the use of these entities in the narratio are governed by rules that are not mere reflections of regularities existing in the past but which have a standing of their own. Those entities embody what are commonly called "theses on the past" — one should think here of comprehensive, panoramic interpretations of large parts of the past (e.g. the idea that there was an "Industrial Revolution" at the end of the 18th century, or that the 17th century was an age of crisis).

The claim that a narrative historiography is essentially the proposal of some such "thesis on the past" - which will be called a "narrative substance" in this study - is the second pillar under our narrativist building. In Chapter V the concept narrative substance is defended against a number of possible objections. In the course of discussing these objections the nature of these narrative substances is clarified. Chapter VI describes the rather peculiar logical features of narrative substances. It is stressed that Leibniz's theory of the proposition based upon his so-called "praedicatum inest subjecto"-principle is particularly useful in gaining an insight into narrative logic. It is proved that narrative substances do not refer to (aspects of) the past and that the two ways in which narrative substances can be typified account for the difference between concepts like "the Renaissance" or "the Enlightenment" (which do not have the capacity to refer to reality) and concepts like "this chair" or "this human being" (which do possess this capacity). It becomes clear that all this has its consequences for the concept of self-identity: in one of its uses the word "I" refers to a "narrative substance". In Chapter

VII it is shown that there is a close resemblance between metaphor and narratio: in both a "point of view" from which we are invited to see reality is proposed. And here we have, lastly, the third pillar under narrativist philosophy. It should be emphasized that these three fundamental theorems of narrativist philosophy are all derived from one simple datum, viz. that narratios consist of constative singular statements on states of affairs in the past.

Two implications of narrativist philosophy as it has been described in Chapters IV to VII are revealed in the last chapter of the book. It is asserted that a set of just singular statements may have explanatory force: neither implicitly nor explicitly is it necessary to resort to general statements for a logically acceptable historical explanation. Furthermore, it is claimed that out of two competing narratios (both containing only true statements on the past) we should always prefer the narratio that takes most risks and is most courageous. There is an obvious parallel with Popper's idea that one should always look for the scientific theory with the greatest degree of falsifiability, because "the more a statement forbids, the more it says about the world of experience"[1]. Curiously enough, current philosophy of history has never shown much interest in the question as to what makes historians prefer one interpretation of the past to another.

On the whole, narrative philosophy is hostile to attempts at turning history into "a social science", as well as to speculative philosophies of history (both approaches to history will be shown to have striking resemblances) and to hermeneutic theory. The social sciences can learn more from history than history from the social sciences: historiography is a pure culture of many of the methodological troubles that haunt the social sciences. However, narrative philosophy shows a close affinity with historism as advocated by writers such as Ranke, Meinecke or Huizinga (i.e. *not* with the historic/sm attacked by Popper in his well-known book[2]) and as practised by contemporary historians like Febvre, Braudel or Trevor-Roper. No one can write history as it is done by 90% of all living historians without being a historist. However, historism as a theory of historical writing has to be emended in some respects.

I expect that the reader accustomed to contemporary analytical philosophy will come to feel some dissatisfaction with the style of this inquiry. In this study the inter-relatedness of a great number of philosophical problems (such as reference, identity, metaphor, explanation and so on) is investigated. One may object that such problems ought to be studied separately. In support of this objection it may be argued that if so

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1. Popper (1): p. 119.
2. Cf. Popper (2): especially Chapter IV. N.B. in this book the term *historicism* will always refer exclusively to speculative philosophies of history as developed by e.g. Hegel, Marx, Spengler or Toynbee; whereas the word *historism* will be used to indicate the ideas on the writing of history put forward by e.g. Humboldt, Ranke, Huizinga or Meinecke and whose intellectual origins in 18th century thought have been explored by Meinecke in his F. Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus,* Munchen 1965 (1st ed. 1936).

many different philosophical phenomena are subsumed under one common denominator, my analysis can hardly be honest or unbiassed: motives quite alien to the problem investigated will cause me to prefer one specific solution. The detail will be violated by the system. Consequently, I may even be accused of trying to revive the kind of system-mongering that so disfigured the face of German Idealist philosophy. Admittedly, there is a clear difference between most of contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy — which is so strongly problem-orientated and always attempts to solve philosophical problems by isolating them as much as possible from others — and the more synthetical approach followed here.

I should like to make the following two remarks in my defence: one about the nature of the present inquiry, the other about the nature of philosophical investigation in general. Firstly, the narratio is like a machine that can only function thanks to its constituent parts: therefore, it may be expected that narrativist philosophy is essentially an investigation of these constituent parts and their inter-relatedness. Secondly, current analytical philosophy of language seems to be inspired by a kind of empiricism that is in many respects similar to the empiricism which was advocated in the 17th and 18th centuries in connection with the sciences. In those days it was believed that the sciences ought to strive for no more and no less than the collection of a great number of disconnected truths on nature. Bacon is of course a fine example. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is the most outstanding specimen of what an analogous approach to the philosophy of language leads to: although some general views lurk behind these unpretentious and disconnected paragraphs such views are only seldom explicitly formulated because of Wittgenstein's belief that the *point de depart* for a genuine philosophical discussion lies elsewhere. He regards philosophy as an instrument that may help us whenever and wherever language exceeds its proper bounds. And just as there is no medicine to cure all diseases, general views cannot be conceived of within such a conception of philosophy.

Whatever the attractions of this empiricism *in philosophicis* may be, it is not beyond *all* reasonable doubt. Most of the reliable scientific knowledge we possess and its astonishing growth in the past two hundred years, are the result of the scientists' attempts to discover something general in those very diverse phenomena of reality. So, why shouldn't we follow the same course in philosophy? If the abandonment of a pure empiricism has proved to be a necessary condition not only for the tremendous development of science since the days of Newton but also for a correct understanding of this development, why, then, should philosophers have to be content with an a-theoretical analysis of disconnected linguistic phenomena? Could a "synthetical philosophy of language" not have at least some advantages over an "analytical philosophy of language" - to take this label seriously for once? I hope this book may suggest a positive answer to this last question.

I would like to thank professor J.J.A. Mooij, my mentor in philosophical matters, for his unswerving criticism during the development of

this book. Thanks to his love of precision, his robust common sense and philosophical acumen numerous unclarities and philosophical *gaffes* have been eradicated. The debt I owe to professor E.H. Kossmann is of a different kind. Since my undergraduate years as a student of history I have always been deeply impressed by his approach to history. When I was reflecting on the problems discussed in this study, it was his way of writing history — intelligent, panoramic and penetrating — that I constantly had in mind. Moreover, whenever I was in danger of being carried away by my theoretical enthusiasm, he forced me to face the harsh realities of the writing of history. A special word of gratitude is due to professor W.H. Walsh: he read the manuscript for Nijhoff and suggested a number of corrections of great importance. I talked over most of the problems dealt with here with my best friend Jaap den Hollander; our discussions were always most stimulating to me and I should like to thank him for his encouragement.

CHAPTER I.
PRELIMINARIES

(I) Introductory Remarks. This book will be an inquiry into the logical structure of narrative historiography (the term "logical" should be understood in a broad sense so as to include the domain of "philosophical logic")[1]. Narrative historiography as it is and was and not historiography as it ought to be will be the subject of this analysis. I shall not specify rules for the writing of history with the intention of changing historiography for the better. Historiography as it now is seems to me to produce an unexceptionable, though quite particular kind of knowledge and in my opinion those who think otherwise are usually insufficiently aware of the solid logical structure of historical language. For is not historiography intelligible to us all, even if we do not know why it is satisfactory to us? The philosopher of history who is dissatisfied with narrative historiography because he cannot explain why it is intelligible to him, has translated his own lack of insight into the nature of narrative historiography into a critique of the discipline he investigates. And that is not the way one should proceed in the philosophy of history.

One might object, however, that specifying the rules for the writing of history is tantamount to assuming a normative position, because such rules always state how history *ought* to be written. But I think that this would overstress the meaning of the word "normative". We simply cannot say that narrative history ought to be written in conformity with these logical rules, for this would imply that there are historical narratives in which these rules are not obeyed. And this cannot be the case. Someone who systematically breaks the rules of arithmetic is no longer practising arithmetic.

Our inquiry will be limited to written texts. That is to say, historical films or plays will be excluded from the present investigation. A film or a play is constructed in such a way as to give the spectator the impression of being present at the scene of action. The spectator fulfils the rôle of a passive participant. Therefore, the representation of historical social reality offered by historical films or plays is not yet structured within a narrative frame. This is not contradicted by the fact that writers of plays or producers of films often try to make it as easy as possible for the spectator to proceed from just seeing the play or the film to giving it a narrative interpretation. Only when this step is taken, e.g. when we write down what happened in a particular play or film, is there a narrative structure. In short, historical plays or films can be interpreted as, or translated into, narrative structures, but they do not have such structures themselves. And even the fact that such films or

1. In the introduction to P.P. Strawson, *Philosophical logic,* Oxford 1973 Strawson defines the subject-matter of philosophical logic.

plays may be dramatizations of written (historiographical) narratives makes no difference.

But what about the scripts for these films or plays? Shouldn't we regard these scripts as historiographical narratives? Consider a department of history that investigates only texts written or spoken by people in the past — one could think of intellectual history or the history of philosophy. The analogy with the scripts is obvious: in both cases we are concerned with the actual words used by people in the past. Imagine a piece of historical writing that consists only of quotations from the works of one or more philosophers. Such a series of quotations may result from — or strongly suggest — an ordering of these quotations within a narrative frame, but — and this is essential -it is not such a narrative frame itself. Therefore, no narrative historiography can consist exclusively of quotations. And we may conclude that we should not regard scripts of historical films or plays as historiographical narratives.

When I say that this book will be concerned with the logical structure of historical narrative, I claim both too little and too much. As for the "too little": what will be said in the subsequent chapters has, no doubt, considerable bearing upon *all* narrative (that is, not only the historical) use of language as we find it for instance in novels, journals, textbooks and so on. It seems a reasonable assumption that historical language is the prototype of all narrative *genres:* only after human beings had acquired the ability to speak about their personal or collective past did myth, poetry and fiction become possible. Our past is the best matrix for learning how to arrange statements on reality in a consistent way. We can conclude that the philosophy of history, and, more specifically, narrativist philosophy will also be of fundamental importance for linguistics and the study of literature and fiction.

The "too much" in my claim requires a more elaborate explanation. In German and Dutch philosophy of history a distinction is often made between "geschiedsvorsing" and "geschiedschrijving"[2], i.e. between "historical research" and the "narrative writing of history". The term "historical research" refers to the historian's desire to establish the facts of the historical process with a maximum of exactitude. When the historian does his historical research we can compare him with Collingwood's well-known detective who wishes to find the murderer of John Doe[3]: he wants to know what actually happened, who did or wrote what, how texts should be interpreted and so on. A number of "auxiliary sciences" (of which *modern* socio-economic history is the most conspicuous) have been evolved to assist the historian in his attempt to establish the facts. But a historian is essentially more than a "fact-finder" or a detective. Getting to know the facts is only a preliminary phase in the task he sets himself.

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2. Huizinga, p. 110; the same distinction has been made by Elton in his G.R. Elton, *The practice of history,* London 1967, pp. 160 ff. See also H.I. Marrou, *De la connaisance historique,* Paris 1973, p. 30.
3. Collingwood (l), p.274 ff.

For his real problem is how to integrate these facts into a consistent historical narrative. Obviously, this is what I called the "narrative writing of history".

I am quite aware that for various well-known reasons which need not be repeated here, it is impossible to draw a sharp line between historical research and the narrative writing of history. Of course, facts are generally only looked for and described within a specific frame of narrative interpretation. On the other hand, facts are to a considerable degree responsible for what narrative interpretations of the past will eventually look like. But it is wrong to over-estimate this state of affairs and — as some of the more extreme adherents of a coherence theory of truth tend to do — to conclude from the impossibility of drawing an exact line between historical research and the narrative writing of history that the two should not be distinguished at all[4]. Historical practice itself offers sufficient argument against such an over-dramatic point of view. There are many historians who have an exclusive interest in historical research: they are concerned with establishing how cities or convents acquired legal or feudal rights, how historical monuments came to be erected, how diplomatic treaties came into being, they study the changes in the price of bread or the growth and decline in the population of different areas. Furthermore, this detective-like approach to the past is the essence of much work done in archaeology. On the other hand, there are the historians with a more synthetical turn of mind; to the best of their abilities they try to integrate the facts found by historical research into large over-all views of (parts of) the past. They are concerned not so much with the facts themselves or even with their correct interpretation as with the question of what might be the most acceptable representation or synopsis of parts of the past. Their problem is how the history of the past should be narratively written or which narratio proposes the best interpretation of (parts of) the past.

Everyone who only has a superficial knowledge of the historical trade will be able to tell these two kinds of historians apart and to distinguish between the sort of historical writing produced by each. The difference between most of the writing of a Trevor-Roper or a Talmon on the one hand and those learned dissertations of the Annales-school on the other are obvious to anyone, although I admit that there are historical studies which are hard to place in either class. But that is not an argument against the distinction: even though it is impossible to say where your neck ends and your body begins, this anatomical distinction is unexceptionable.

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4. Oakeshott was such an extreme defender of the coherence theory of truth: he argued that our factual knowledge of the past (the concern of historical research) is just as much a construction of the historian as the narrative interpretation of historical facts (the concern of historical writing). See Oakeshott, Chapter III. This point of view leads to a blurring of the distinction between historical research and the narrative writing of history. A perceptive evalution of Oakeshott's "constructivism" can be found in J.W. Meiland, *Scepticism and historical knowledge,* New York 1965, pp. 41-63.

Nearly all current philosophy of history is concerned with the philosophical problems of historical research ("what are historical facts?", "how can facts be explained?", "how do values influence the accounts given of historical facts?") and we cannot fail to be impressed by the work done in this field. Certainly, current philosophy of history is a flourishing discipline and a number of recent studies have widened our knowledge of historical research in a most satisfactory way. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the narrative writing of history has been neglected. This has been the first major motivation for the writing of this book. The other is that I believe the philosophical problems of the narrative writing of history to be more fundamental than current opinion allows. Unfortunately I cannot explain in this early stage of our inquiry why a philosophical analysis of the narrative writing of history is so important for a correct understanding of the nature of historical knowledge. In fact, this study is the best evidence I have to support this assertion. So, I ask the reader to postpone his judgment till the end of the book.

The attempt to analyze the narrative writing of history is of a relatively recent date. It has not always met with approval. I will now discuss a number of criticisms of the narrativist approach here. Firstly, it has been argued by Mandelbaum[5] that a narrative representation of the past must necessarily confine itself to the sphere of intentional human action. And since the days of Hegel (or, rather, Bernard de Mandeville[6]) we know that much in human history cannot be adequately explained by referring exclusively to the motives and the intentions of individual human beings. Very often, perhaps even in most cases, historians describe or explain the past with the help of concepts and theories unknown to the historical agents themselves. I entirely agree. But I do not see why narrative historiography is not allowed to go beyond intentional human action. Although I can give

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5. Mandelbaum (1); Olafson, on the other hand, accuses a narrativist like Danto of excluding the sphere of intentional human action from narrative accounts of the past. He says that the historical agents whose actions are described in the narratio "cannot, after all, act in accordance with rules [i.e. the covering laws of the CLM-ist] that are formulated in terms that are unfamiliar or unintelligible" to those agents themselves; Olafson, p. 271.

6. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophic der Weltgeschichte. Band I. Die Vemuft in der Geschichte* (Felix Meiner Verlag), Hamburg 1970, p. 88: "jener Zusammenhang enthält nämlich dies, dass in der Weltgeschichte durch die Handlungen der Menschen noch etwas anderes überhaupt herauskomme, als sie bezwecken und erreichen, als sie unmittelbar wissen und wollen. Sie vollbringen ihr Interesse; aber es wird noch ein Ferneres damit zustande gebracht, das auch innerlich darin liegt, aber das nicht in ihrem Bewusstsein und ihrer Absicht lag". And in his B. de Mandeville, *The fable of the bees; or private vices, public benefits,* London 1729, Mandeville already focused his attention on the unintended consequences of our actions. It is one of the miracles of modern philosophy of history that this old and venerable argument — which is clearly fatal to hermeneutic theory and all its modern successors (e.g. Collingswood's "re-enactment", Dray's "action rationale explanation" and the Ideological explanations canvassed by Von Wright and Martin) — has never seriously been dealt with by philosophers standing in the hermeneutic tradition.

here only a very rough definition of the scope of narrative philosophy it is perfectly safe to say that narrative philosophy studies the question of how historians integrate a great number of historical facts into one synthetical whole (e.g. "the Industrial Revolution" or "the Cold War"). There is no reason whatsoever why these "historical facts" should be restricted to what went on in the heads of individual historical agents. Anyway, in this book a type of narrativist philosophy is evolved in which such a restriction is never made. And I should like to add that a narrativist philosophy as propounded here is even quite inimical to the kind of hermeneutic tendencies of which it is accused by Mandelbaum.

In a recent book Mandelbaum mentioned another difficulty he supposed to be inherent in the narrativist approach. Narrativism, he says, suggests that research is not necessary for writing history. His argument seems to be that narrative accounts can only be given *of fictitious* events. It is certainly true that narrativist philosophy does not investigate the question of how historical events can be established, this being the department of the philosophy of historical research. But this does not in anyway commit narrative philosophy to the view that the historian is free to fabricate his historical events. Mandelbaum's critique of narrativist philosophy is all the more astonishing because in the remainder of his book he comes closer to it than most contemporary philosophers of history[7].

A somewhat similar argument has been put forward by L.J. Goldstein. He distinguishes between the "superstructure" and the "infrastructure" in historical writing[8]. The term "superstructure" refers to the narrative form historical accounts of the past usually have; the term "infrastructure" refers to the totality of research-techniques the historian applies in his analysis of the past. All progress in historiography has been due to evolutions in the infrastructure, Goldstein says, while the superstructure has by and large been left unchanged since the days of Thucydides. And this leads Goldstein to conclude that for the philosopher of history only an inquiry into the infrastructure can be of any real interest. I do not agree. If the narrative form in which the historian casts his accounts of the past is not subject to change it seems fairly obvious to me that this narrative form must be an important clue to the nature of historical knowing.

There is another objection to narrative philosophy that causes somewhat more trouble. It is pointed out that so-called "narrative historiography" is only a small and out-dated part of historiography. Books such as Huizinga's *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* or Braudel's famous *Méditerranée* do not provide a story, or narrative, in the proper sense of the word[9]. If even such books no longer have a narrative character, the same can certainly be expected to apply to present problem-orientated historical literature. This

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7. Mandelbaum (3), p. 25; in his L.O. Mink, Maurice Mandelbaum. The anatomy of historical knowledge, *History and theory* (1978) 211-223, Mink has shown convincingly how close the substance of Mandelbaum's book really is to the narrative approach to history. See also Ankersmit (2).
8. Goldstein, Chapter V.
9. Dray (2); Ely et. al.

objection is not so much wrong as misdirected. It arises from the misleading associations which, admittedly, the term "narratio" may call to mind. Many people when hearing the word "narratio" primarily think of historiography modelled on the kind of writing produced in literary fiction and are inclined to think that books like Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* or Dickens' *David Copperfield* are the ideal types of narrative fiction and most clearly show what narrative structures are. Consequently, narrative historiography is easily associated in particular with biographies or books on the history of diplomatic relations and military feats. It is argued, then, that most modern historiography studies problems regarding the character of a specific historical period, whereas narrativist philosophy can at most hope to explain the more old-fashioned kind of historical writing in which some diachronic development is described. However, in the analysis which I shall try to develop, it is precisely this modern, non-story telling, so-called "cross-sectional" approach to history that will turn out to be most in conformity with narrativist philosophy. The main reason for this curious situation is that narrativist philosophy is more interested in the (logical) nature of the linguistic entities we use in discussing the past (such as "nations", "intellectual movements" or "climates of opinion") than in how the path of a nation or intellectual movement through time should be described. And, of course, we should first know what kind of thing "the Renaissance" or "the French nation" is, before we can describe its historical evolution. Consequently, narrativist philosophy has more affinity with studies of the Renaissance or of the Enlightenment than with, for instance, histories of England between 1688 and 1832.

My critic might entirely reverse his argument and accuse narrativist philosophy of neglecting the kind of historiography that studies diachronic developments. As I suggested above, my answer to this objection will be that the results of narrativist philosophy are a necessary preliminary to a solution of the philosophical problems raised by this "developmental" historiography. As will become clear in due time (especially in Chapters V and VI), narrativist philosophy is very well capable of providing such a solution. To sum up, whenever in this book the terms "narratio" and "narrative substance" are to be used, all associations with the *belles-lettres* and with a story-telling kind of historiography should be avoided. I shall use these terms as synonymous with "historical interpretation"; a narratio is supposed to develop a thesis on the past, or to propose a certain "point of view" from which the past should be seen. Since such theses, interpretations or "points of view" always require a narratio for their exposition, I describe my investigation as an investigation of the historical narratio.

(2) *Objections to Psychologism.* Another possible objection to our attempt to establish a narrative logic is that the narratio can only be analyzed scientifically, that is to say, by strictly limiting the investigation to what happens at the linguistic, psychological or sociological level, when narratios are used as a medium for communication between people. This is largely the position taken up by such narrativists as Gallie, Louch, Perelman, Hexter, Toliver or Struever. Gallie is probably the most outspoken defender of this

attitude towards the narratio. He is interested exclusively in the conditions for optimal communication between the historian and his public. According to Gallie a historical narratio is successful, if the historian succeeds in "pulling" the reader along all the contingent facts related in the narratio, by making clever use of our "basic inter-human feelings"[10]. Gallie, like the other narrativists just mentioned, sees the narratio only as a medium for transmitting a message by adroitly putting into motion some psychological machinery in the reader's mind (i.e. his "basic inter-human feelings"). He is not interested in the narratio itself, but merely in the workings of some psychological mechanism in the reader's mind and more particularly in the question as to which ways and means the historian should choose to make the wheels of this mechanism go round. Gallie offers no analysis of what the narratio actually is and he only attempts to show how narrative communication *works*. He is, therefore, like the electrical engineer who, having been asked to explain the technical details of the telephone, restricts himself to indicating how the telephone should be operated.

We recognize a similar line of argument in Louch's views on the narratio. He wants the historian to offer to his public a "proxy-experience" of the past; or, in other words, the historian should give his reader a surrogate of his own experience of the past. The words, or rather the narratios that the historian uses to that end, are "like hooks that pull [historical] reality into language"[11]. Essential to the narratio is therefore its *evocative* nature; the narratio provides an "evocation" rather than a description of the past. How can this evocation of the past be achieved? In answering this question, Louch draws attention to the fact that historians often characterize individuals, groups or nations by means of terms like "aggressive", "cunning", "friendly" and so on. When using such terms the historian not only describes past reality, but also awakens in us experiences which we commonly associate with terms like "aggressive", "cunning" etc. Our memories of these past experiences are the building-blocks from which every successful "evocation" of the past is constructed. Thus, historical language not only conveys descriptive information; it is also — and that is by far its most important task — a kind of intermediary instrument, external to both the historian and his public, which makes the wheels of the psychological mechanism in the mind of the listener or reader go round in such a way that this mechanism produces an "image" or an "evocation" of the past. And in this connection Louch likens historiography to caricatures. Do we not all prefer a caricature of some well-known person by Levine to a photography? If the photograph corresponds with the purely descriptive representation of the past, and the caricatural exaggeration with the "evocative" part in the historian's representation of the past, then we may conclude that the latter is the most essential element in the writing of history. For whoever puts absolute trust in the descriptive element of a caricature is in for an unpleasant surprise. And

10. Gallie, p. 45.
11. Louch, p. 62.

we may also be sure that each inquiry into historical knowing and the nature of narrative must necessarily be an inquiry into how an "evocation" of the past can be constructed out of what we commonly associate with terms like "aggressive", "cunning", " friendly" and so on[12].

There are, I think, a number of misconceptions in this narrativist theory. Firstly, the historian can never give a "proxy-experience" of the past because not even the historian has actually experienced the past itself. He has worked with his sources, his documents and so on, but these are not the past itself. So Louch's analysis of the task of the historian is based on his confusing the past itself with its documentary relics. As, however, it is very well conceivable for a writer to give an "evocation" of an event at which he was not present, this objection only proves that the term "proxy-experience" was improperly used and not that it would be impossible to "evocate" the past. Secondly, in order to stress the "evocative" element of the narratio, Louch pointed out that there is a similarity between the work of a caricaturist and that of a historian. However, the difference between the two is vital. We admire a caricature because it strikingly characterizes the original physiognomy that we are familiar with. But we do not know the past. Or rather - to continue Louch's metaphor - we know it, but only from caricatures. And if we were to know a face only from caricatures we would be in no position to judge which one is the best. Thirdly, and this is a more important point, the associations connected with words like "aggressive", "cunning" or "friendly" will differ from person to person. Therefore, a particular narratio may produce in the mind of a reader an "evocation" quite different from what the historian intended to convey. Hence, in order to avoid ambiguities, the historian should restrict himself exclusively to factual, descriptive language. Moreover, there is another difficulty. Even if we assume a general agreement among all people on the "evocative" value of terms like "aggressive", "cunning" and so on (that is, all readers have exactly the same associations when they read these terms), how can we know that they are correctly used? In other words: to what aspects of (things in) the past that cannot be rendered in purely descriptive terms does the "evocative" component in these terms correspond? I do not think it will be easy for Louch to answer this question without abandoning the essence of his analysis.

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12. Psychologistic tendencies can also be found in the writings of J.H. Hexter. Thus he writes that the historian must always bear in mind who his readers are in order to be most successful in "the reorganization of their thinking"; see J.H. Hexter, *The history primer,* New York 1971, p. 144. However, due to the extreme looseness of his argument, it is hard to say with precision how far Hexter ventures in the direction of psychologism. The tendency so characteristic of psychologism to translate questions on the narratio itself into questions on the communication between the historian and his audience is also manifest in Perelman (2). The same is true for Toliver, pp. 3-70 and for recent attempts to assimilate historiography and rhetorics, e.g., N. Struever, Topics in history, *History and theory,* Beiheft 19 (1980) 66-8.

But let us leave the caricatures for what they are and return to the central issue. Nearly all psychologistic interpretations of the narratio, that of Louch included, are based on a most peculiar conception of the nature of (narrative) language. Louch tends to regard (narrative) language as a mere medium between the historian and his public, a medium itself devoid of cognitive content. Cognitive content only comes into being at the moment that the language-medium successfully plays the "keyboard" of the mind. Indeed, to pursue the musical metaphor, there is a strong tendency to liken language to musical notation. (Narrative) language is held to be a notation system and not a descriptive system: it is supposed to consist of a series of signs (not having a meaning themselves in the way (strings of) words have a meaning) that evoke certain images in the mind just as the notes of a musical score invite us to produce noises of a particular pitch and duration. The resulting cognitive content is believed to reside on the side of the mind (of listener and speaker) and definitely not on that of the merely intermediary (narrative) language; similarly, a melody can only be *heard* and not *seen* (although some musically gifted people can follow a melody by just looking at the musical score; but even what these people see is not a pleasure for their eyes but for their "mental" ears). This tendency to confuse (narrative) language with a notation system, like musical notation, is one of the fundamental weakness of the psychologistic approach. For there is an essential difference between the two; (narrative) language itself possesses cognitive content on account of its capacity to *describe* reality — e.g. the music we hear — while the musical notation only *denotes* the music played. The musical score is a kind of manual or guide: it tells you to do all sorts of things (and all of them in a certain way) so that the result will be something that is pleasing to the ear. But manuals or guides are not descriptions of the results of the actions recommended in them. Musical scores are not descriptions of music. Consequently, the psychologistic approach to the narratio rests on a mistaken view of (narrative) language in that it ignores its descriptive function in favour of its alleged notational character. We can reformulate this critique of the psychologistic account of the narratio as follows. Psychologistic narrativist philosophy dissociates narrative language itself from the knowledge we acquire when hearing narrative language: narrative language does not contain knowledge itself but only stimulates its developments in our minds. Narrative language is likened to the electrical impulses in a telephone that cause the production of the sounds of human voices while not being these sounds themselves. But this is wrong; having knowledge (of the past) is having knowledge (of the past) as it is formulated in narrative language and this narrative language is not a mere intermediary power. When you have read a narratio, you have read a narratio and that is all there is to it.

Before adducing a general argument against all attempts to analyze the narratio from a psychologistic perspective, I wish to make a short remark on terminology. At the beginning of this section I said that the scientific

approach to the narratio can proceed from different perspectives, viz. linguistic, sociological, psychological and so on, or combinations of them such as socio-linguistics or psycho-linguistics. I take the liberty of lumping all these variants together under the general heading "psychologistic" — not because I consider the psychologistic approach to be better or worse than the others, but simply because in the literature the psychologistic element occurs more frequently than any of the others. Moreover, I should make it clear that my aim is not to suggest that the psychologistic study of the narratio is inveterately wrong and cannot produce useful insight. On the contrary, I am convinced that it will provide us with a lot of interesting details about how narrative language is actually used and how it is influenced by all kinds of cultural, psychological of sociological determinants. It comes close to the study of rhetorics which is, I believe, a most appropriate study to enable us to understand to what degree the (narrative) use of language is tied up with political, ethical or — to use the very best word in this connection — "practical" arguments and stratagems.

However, mere common sense shows that the psychologistic approach can never tell us the whole story of the narratio. Let us suppose that there is a reader R who — unlike all other known readers — is incapable of understanding a particular narratio (let us not be difficult here about the meaning of the verb "to understand" and take it in its ordinary, generally accepted sense). Confronted with the case of R the psychologist can do nothing but conclude that the empirical psychologistical laws that made him expect or even predict that R would understand that particular narratio are apparently false. He will therefore have to refine his laws in such a way that they also apply to the case of R. But that is not our normal reaction in such a situation: we would simply say that R *ought* to have understood the narratio submitted to him. This we can only do on the assumption (not necessarily shared by the psychologist — and even rejected by him when he studies the narratio as a psychologist) — that there are a number of narrativist rules, that enable us to write and to interpret narratios. Of course, the psychologist might argue that common sense is apparently a poor guide and that we have no right to say that a reader ought to understand a narratio which every normal person understands.

But such a heroic move would lead to absurd results. Not being permitted to say that someone *ought* to understand a narratio entails that we are never sufficiently justified in saying that someone (including ourselves) in fact *does* understand a narratio. To judge whether a reader understands a certain narratio we obviously need a test and we stipulate that a reader understands this narratio if and only if he is capable of giving the correct answer contained in the test. But the psychologist cannot tolerate such tests. According to him, the only thing we know is that there are narratios, understood or interpreted by different persons in different ways; and all one can do is try to find a maximum of regularity in all this. Therefore, he must condemn these tests as purely arbitrary norms (for why this particular test and not any others?) and by rejecting such "arbitrary norms" (as embodied in the tests) he forbids us to say a) that

someone *ought* to have understood a narratio and b) that someone actually ever *has* understood a narratio. And that is patently absurd.

There is however one requirement of a psychologistic character — which will be specified in a moment - which also belongs to the domain of narrative logic and thus has to be mentioned. Can a solitary person tell narratios? I will not enter into subtleties concerning the possibility or impossibility of "private languages" — anyway, if the solitary person cannot consistently use a language our problem does not even pose itself. It is certainly true that we, who participate in a language-using community, are capable of telling narratios to ourselves, although we may not often do so. So our problem is not whether we can do this when we are alone because no reasonable person will doubt this, but whether a solitary person can tell narratios (and *if* he does, he tells them, of course, to himself). I presume that we must answer this question in the negative.

I have suggested already that there are certain rules for the construction of narratios, whose nature I intend to examine in this study. Whatever we may be able to show these rules to be, that they exist is self-evident: we cannot just say *anything* at a given stage of a narratio. These rules (whatever their nature) guide us when we feel tempted to insert a particular statement in our narratio but then realize that we should leave it out if we want to construct an intelligible narratio. In the case of a solitary person, such a conflict between what he wants to say and what he *can* say — if he desires to be intelligible — can never arise. He will understand whatever he wants to say — supposing he is not a fool. So our rules do not apply in the case of the solitary person. He "lives" his rules, so to speak; he has his own "rules", which do not possess the objective existence that we can attribute to the kind or rules that we, as participants in a language community, apply when telling a narratio. This fact has also been observed by Michel Tournier in his *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique,* a book that contains a number of brilliant insights into the logical and psychological consequences of living in solitude. Tournier describes how Robinson arms himself against the mental disintegration that constantly threatens him when he lives all by himself on his desert island. One of the dangers Robinson has to face is his slackening grip on language: "j'ai beau parler sans cesse à haute voix, ne jamais laisser passer une réflexion, une idée sans aussitôt la proférer à l'adresse des arbres ou des nuages, je vois de jour en jour s'effondrer des pans entiers de la citadelle verbale dans laquelle notre pensée s'abrite et se meut familièrement, comme la taupe dans son réseau de galeries. Des points fixes sur lesquels la pensée prend appui pour progresser —comme on marche sur les pierres émergeant du lit d'un torrent — s'effritent, s'enfoncent. II me vient des doutes sur le sens des mots qui ne désignent pas des choses concrètes. Je ne puis parler qu'à la lettre. La métaphore, la litote et 1'hyperbole me demandent un effort d'attention démesuré dont 1'effet inattendu est de faire ressortir tout ce qu'il y a d'absurde et de

convenu dans ces figures de rhétorique"[13]. Thus, we may conclude that necessary condition for stories, narratios etc. is that the person who tells them does not lead a solitary life, or, at least, that he does have the memory of a social form of life.

Apart from this single point where the psychologistical and the logical analyses advanced in this book overlap, these approaches differ widely. I have chosen for the logical approach. Consequently, I will omit what has been written on the narratio by psycholinguists or French structuralists who try to find the empirical laws that govern the construction of actual narratios. Narrative logic attempts to give a description of narrative structures that ought to be acceptable even if the first narratio still had to be written. And this is an appropriate place to add that, in conformity with this logical approach to the narratio, epistemological questions will rarely be taken into account. I will assume for the remainder of this book that states of affairs in the past can be unambiguously described by means of constative statements. I am very well aware of the objections that could be raised regarding this assumption, but I don't think this is of any consequence for narrative logic.

(3) *The Narratio and the Historical Novel.* In the preceding pages I have used the words "story", "narrative", and "novel" rather loosely. From now on I will use the technical term "narratio" to indicate solely the historiographical, narrative representation of the past. The narratio is a linguistic entity essentially different from other coherent systems of sentences such as poems, novels, sermons, mathematical proofs and so on. Therefore the historiographical narrative representation of the past has an undeniable right to a name of its own. In order to point out the difference between the narratio on the one hand and poems, sermons etc. on the other, I will not undertake the Herculean task of comparing the narratio with all these other literary forms. Nearest to the narratio is the novel and amongst all kinds of novels it is, of course, the historical novel that comes closest to the narratio. So if we succeed in drawing a line of demarcation between the historical narratio and the historial novel, we may safely say that we have isolated the narratio from all other forms of narrative literature. I will not, however, attempt to give a precise definition of what a historical novel is. The reader may come to his own conclusion; he may draft a definition of the historical novel that puts it as close to the historical narratio as he wants to: nevertheless, I hope to be able to show where the difference lies.

On the face of it, it does not appear to be difficult to draw the line of demarcation. Unfortunately it turns out to be depressingly hard to find a formal justification for our intuitions. Before proceeding, we are well advised to consider the following methodological points. Of course, there are a great number of narratives we can all agree to label either "narratios" or "historical novels". This confronts us with a choice between two strategies: a) we can be content with an investigation and a careful

13. M. Tournier, Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique, Paris 1972; p. 68.

reconstruction of our actual use of these two labels, b) we can try to find some independent criterion for a distinction between the two narrative *genres* that explains our actual use of these labels. There is yet another consideration. The borderline between the two *genres* may be very unstable. It may therefore be useful to establish a scale in such a manner that each individual narratio or novel corresponds with a particular point on that scale. If, for instance, on the left side of the scale we put the historical novels and on the right the narratios, historical novels in which the purely historiographical component is more prominent than in others shall be placed a little closer to the centre of the scale. Something similar could be done for narratios (think of Golo Mann's book on Wallenstein). Again, we can choose: a) we can be content with providing each narratio or historical novel with its appropriate place on the scale and declare that it would be nonsense to look for a zero point, a particular point, that is, that marks the exact distinction between narratios and historical novels, b) we can hope that it will be possible to establish where zero lies on the scale. It requires little effort to see the parallelism between these two methodological considerations. In both cases, option a) implies choosing for a "phenomenological" approach: no more can or should be done than just register the actual use of the terms "narratio" and "historical novel". Option b) tries to find a rationale behind this actual usage.

I prefer option b) to option a), not because I believe option a) to be wrong but because I consider it to be insufficient. Firstly, option a) has a built-in tendency to lapse into circular arguments of the type "this is a historical novel (or narratio as the case may be) simply because that is what we call it". Secondly, even of option a) were to establish succesfully the distinguishing marks of the historical novel and the narratio, we may remain dissatisfied. A relatively untechnical person may correctly use the terms "gasoline motor" and "Diesel motor" on the basis of some easily observable differences between these two engines, but nevertheless be quite unaware of the real differences between them. What I am looking for is not some fact about our actual use of language, but about the nature of two narrative *genres.* Although, admittedly, actual usage will have to be our compass in this search.

An obvious answer to our question is that the narratio is true to fact, while fiction, and in particular the historical novel, is not. This view has been defended, among others, by Collingwood. He wrote: "As works of immagination, the historian's work and the novelist's do not differ. Where they do differ is that (…..) the novelist has a single task only: to construct a coherent picture, one that makes sense. The historian has a double taks: he has both to do this, and to construct a picture of things as they really were and of events as they really happened"[14]. The problem - as Scholes and Kellogg have already pointed out is that there are several layers of truth in a narrative work (the word "truth" is used here in an unsophisticated way — not until Chapter III will the concepts "truth/falsity

14. Collingwood (1); p. 246.

of the narratio" be scrutinized thoroughly). Firstly, there is the elementary level of the "recording of specific fact" and, secondly, Scholes and Kellogg claim the existence of the level of "the representation of generalized types of actuality"[15]. A historical novel — being fiction — does not tell the truth at the elementary level, but may give a quite reliable representation of those generalized types of actuality of a certain historical period. Anatole France's well known historical novel *Les Dieux ont Soif* is a good example. The principal character, the young man Evariste Gamelin, is of course fictious (first level), but France's portrayal of the revolutionary mentality (second level) is excellent. Moreover, it has even been held - and not implausibly - that the historical novelist, not being checked by the historian's obligation to be cautious and also having a larger range of literary expedients at his disposal, is often in a better position to say true things about the past than the historian. This is no doubt the kernel of truth in Aristotle's famous dictum that poetry is truer than history. Thus, in some cases (not all, of course) we cannot distinguish between the narratio and the historical novel when we limit ourselves to the second level mentioned by Scholes and Kellogg. We may hope, then, that the truth-criterion will be more helpful when applied to the first level.

But even here difficulties arise. Due to an inaccurate reading of the historical documents, a historian's narratio may contain false statements, while on the other hand, a historical novel - say on Napoleon - will doubtlessly contain many true statements on Scholes's and Kellogg's first level. So even on this level the truth-criterion leaves us in the cold. Of course one could point out that historical novels contain many more false statements than narratios. We could try, then, to distinguish between the two narrative *genres* by taking into account the percentage of false statements each of them contains. It may turn out, if we follow this approach, that in all the narratives we call narratios this percentage never exceeds 10%. Have we now found our criterion? Unfortunately we haven't, for it is very well possible that a future book on history produced in some Communist country will score as high as even 15%. And it is even more disturbing to imagine that one day some historical novel may be written with no more than 5% false statements. We may conclude that replacing the truth-criterion with the percentage-criterion will not enable us a) to always distinguish correctly between narratios and historical novels and b) to locate our zero point on the scale.

There is, however, a way out for the truth-criterion. In many historical novels fictitious persons, situations and so on are introduced. There are two theories for determining the truth-value of statements on fictitious things. According to Russell, such statements are simply false; Strawson in a well-known article, has argued that they are neither true

15. Scholes & Kellogg; p. 87. In fact, Scholes & Kellogg identified *three* levels: (1) "recording specific fact" (2) "what resembles specific fact" and (3) "the representation of generalized types of actuality"; since the distinction between (1) and (2) is of no consequence for our investigation, I have combined them in level (1).

nor false — they simply have no truth-value[16]. If we prefer Russell's theory, the prospects of the truth-criterion remain as bad as they were: both narratios and historical novels then only consist of false and true statements and our discussion of the percentage-criterion has shown that the truth-criterion has no chance of success in such a situation.

Strawson's theory however is more promising: it shows that whereas 'narratios 'only 'contain 'true 'and 'false 'statements, 'the historical novel also contains statements without a truth-value. Thus, if we find statements without a truthvalue in a particular narrative it is a historical novel and if not, it is a narratio. So far so good. However, we should note that all we have actually achieved is a translation of the truth-criterion into what one might call a "reference-criterion". The narrative itself does not explicitly say whether a statement has no truth-value: we have to know historical reality in order to find out about that. Of course, it is highly unlikely that Anatole France's historical novel on the life and times of Evariste Gamelin should correspond with historical reality. But it is a matter of mere contingency if it does not. Moreover, we must realize that it is the task of the historical novelist to see to it that his story corresponds with historical fact as much as possible. Indeed, it is not at all improbable that during the French Revolution there were young men who resembled Evariste Gamelin in all relevant respects; their names just happened to be different and the things Gamelin did were done by them in an only slightly different way. Here, our truth-criterion wears very thin: the historical novel and the narratio are indistinguishable when their cognitive core is taken into consideration. Only if we look at the insignificant, circumstantial details does the historical novel have statements without a truth-value, while such statements are absent from the narratio. If this is all we can achieve, we may rightly feel disappointed.

I will now offer one conclusive argument against the truth-criterion. Suppose one day the historical novelist Panomphaios were to write a historical novel on Louis XX (and let us assume Louis XX was really King of France somewhere in the 19th century). A few years after the publication of this historical novel a great number of forgotten documents on Louis XX and his reign are discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale. In these documents an enormous number of details of Louis' life have been summed up by careful and reliable chroniclers. One of the greatest discoveries is that Louis XX, apparantly a diligent observer of his own mental life, has left us a diary revealing his daily broodings during a period that covers a substantial part of his life. This diary has been analyzed by psycho-historians who, subsequently, have come to the conclusion that Louis XX was the kind of person to speak the truth and nothing but the truth in his diary. The most remarkable thing is, however, that with the help of these forgotten documents it was possible

16. P.F. Strawson, On referring, in G.H.R. Parkinson ed., *The theory of meaning*, Oxford 1976.

to prove that each of the constative statements in Panomphaios' historical novel was true. All this is of course highly improbable. But suppose now that Panomphaios wrote exactly the same historical novel not before but after the discovery of the documents and used them as evidence for each statement in his novel. Such a situation is not so hypothetical; in fact, I believe it to be possible to write a historical novel on Louis XIV in which all statements are drawn from the Duke of Saint-Simon's *Mémoires.* Anyway, both Panomphaios' narratives, the one he wrote before the discovery as well as the one after the discovery, are undoubtedly historical novels. Thus we can conceive of historical novels in which all the statements are true. And this forces us to reject the truth-criterion. To this one might object that Panomphaios' narratives are no longer historical novels but narratios because they contain only true statements. It will be obvious that such an argument rests on a prejudgement of the question that is here *sub judice.*

Having rejected the truth-criterion, we may consider Beardsley's proposal for distinguishing between the historical novel and the narratio. According to his so-called "non-assertion theory of fiction" the propositions of the (historical) novel, in contrast with the propositions of a narratio, are not asserted by the author of the (historical) novel. There are a variety of well-known conventions by which this fictional non-assertive use of language can be signalled. For instance, the author may "label his story a "novel", a "romance" (.....) and these are ways of canceling its assertiveness, even if it is believable"[17]. Also very effective in ruling out assertiveness are reports on states of affairs "no one in so-called real life could possibly know"[18]. Indeed, there is an "authoritative way of telling" things typical of the (historical) novel. Yet I don't think that Beardsley's criterion will be more helpful to us than the truth-criterion. We may well imagine some mystifying author who has carefully omitted every signal of non-assertive language from his historical novel. Such authors do exist. Should we then decide that these authors write history (albeit very bad history) or that they are historical novelists all the same? If we opt for the latter we can only do so by using the truth-criterion rejected by both Beardsley and ourselves.

Implicit in Beardsley's argument is the suggestion that we should consider the intentions of the author. We could radicalize this suggestion into the following proposal for demarcating narratios from historical novels: the author of the narratio intends to speak the truth; although he may not always succeed, his narrative is *meant* to be true. Novelists, however, have no such intentions. I have two; objections to this proposal. Firstly, actions are not always a continuation of our intentions. But I admit that it is hard to imagine an] author who intends to write a historical novel while actually producing a narratio, or vice versa. More important is the second objection: we were looking for the differences between instances of

17. Beardsley (l); p. 421.
18. W.C. Booth, *The rhetoric of fiction,* London 1973; p. 3.

two narrative *genres.* As soon as we have to consider the intentions of the author in order to come to a decisive conclusion regarding which is which, the outcome will be that the two narrative *genres* themselves cannot provide us with sufficient criteria for making the distinction. Since it is precisely the latter kind of criteria we are looking for we ought to abstain from having recourse to the intentions of authors.

This brings us back to where we were at the very beginning of this section. I propose to examine once again Scholes' and Kellogg's two levels of truth discernible in historical novels as well as, as I would like to add now, in narratios: the lower level of factual statements on particular occurrences and situations and the level of general comments on the nature of a certain historical period. It is certainly not easy to indicate where the first level begins and where the other ends but their existence is beyond doubt.

On the general level the likeness between the historical novel and the narratio is evident: in both cases we are dealing with generalized knowledge of (an aspect of) some historical period. However, there are two differences. Firstly, and most conspicuously, the writer of a narratio is engaged in building up historical knowledge, in gaining or acquiring it. His discourse is expositive and argumentative; the historical novelist, on the other hand, *applies* this general historical knowledge to one or more particular (imaginary) historical situations. The difference between the narratio and the historical novel is exactly the same as the difference between theoretical and applied science (this, incidentally, shows why the truth-criterion turned out to be ineffective: it is impossible to distinguish theoretical from applied science by resorting to criteria of truth). The second difference lies in the different ways in which the two levels of truth are related to each other in either the narratio or the historical novel. In the narratio the first level leads up to the second: it furnishes the evidence and the illustrations for a comprehensive interpretation of (an aspect of) a historical period (the first level). In the historical novel the reverse happens. The author of the historical novel who knows the major textbooks is in possession of "general" historical knowledge before he proceeds to "materialize" this "general" knowledge into particular, individual cases. If he is a good historical novelist he executes this "substitution-process" so adroitly that the intrinsically alien traces of such "general" knowledge - that is, the whole of level one — completely disappears from direct perception. He does not mention his "general" historiographical knowledge explicitly: it should only show itself in the words and acts of his characters. Just as the laws of mechanics "show" themselves in a well-constructed bridge, so does the historical novel just "show" historical knowledge without expressing it.

A third difference can be derived from the preceding considerations. Very often fictitious personages provide the historical novelist with the entities to which "general" historical knowledge can be applied. He starts with an "empty" human being, a kind of "homunculus"; this "homunculus" is given substance a) by confronting him with the problems of life and b) by

working out his answers to these problems using the knowledge the historical novelist possesses of human nature in general and of the historical period in which the "homunculus" is located. These "homunculi" tie the novelist's narrative together: his descriptions of historical reality are organized from the "point of view" of these "homunculi". Although at times a general account of historical reality may be given in a historical novel, the historical novel essentially shows us historical reality as seen through the eyes of (fictitious) people living in the past. *Their* interpretation of the past, *their* "points of view" on the socio-historical reality contemporary to them, guides the historical novelist's exposition of the past. The narratio, on the other hand, is not written *from* a certain "point of view" on, or interpretation of the past, although some such interpretation or "point of view" is *proposed* in it. The "general" historical knowledge a narratio offers of (part of) the past is essentially the definition of a specific "point of view" from which we are invited to see the past (this thesis will be elaborated in Chapter VII); the historical novel furnishes examples of what one will actually see when applying such a "point of view" to a "homunculus" located in a certain historical period. The historian argues for "points of view" on the past, the historical novelist applies them.

It could be objected that just like the historical novel the narratio is always written from a certain "point of view", because it has a certain subjectmatter. However, a narratio's subject-matter and its "point of view" should not be identified with each other. Firstly subject-matters belong to the past itself, while "points of view" can only be found in history books. Secondly, a historian may choose the socio-economic aspects of the French Revolution as his subject-matter but by doing so he has not stated from what "point of view" he is inviting us to see historical reality. Only *interpretations* of these socio-economic aspects of the French Revolution or of their relevancy to the ideological and political struggle during the Revolution can properly be called "points of view" on (parts of) the French Revolution. Lastly, we are inclined to forget the distinction because historians often (tacitly) imply that what is described by them in their narratios (i.e. their subject-matter) is also essential for a correct understanding of (parts of) the past (and this is an interpretation of, or a "point of view" on the past). But, again, *what* is described is not a description itself. (I refer to Chapter VII, section (3) and (4) for an elaboration of the concept "point of view".)

Historians construct and discuss "points of view", but unlike historical novelists, they do not *start* from certain "points of view" when describing the past. In fact, (honest) historians never say, "if you accept my "point of view" you will have to admit that I am right; but now that you prefer your own "point of view", you cannot possibly appreciate my representation of the past". On the contrary, "points of view" are the central issues in historical discussions: one does not argue *from* them but *for* them. Generally speaking, "points of view" are always

conclusions and never arguments; at least, as long as rational discussion is believed to be instrumental in reaching the truth.

I hope to have determined with sufficient precision where zero point lies on our scale by means of these three closely related differences between the narratio and the historical novel. I am ready to admit that in individual books the two narrative *genres* may be mixed up. But just as a historian may occasionally choose to write in the novelist's manner (think again of Golo Mann's *Wallenstein),* so may a historical novelist wish to expound historical knowledge gained by himself or others in the way historians do (as in Thomas Mann's *Joseph und seine Brüder,* the presence of a narrator in a historical novel may introduce this historiographical component). But this is not an argument against the distinction made. On the contrary, our ability to identify alien elements in either historical novel or narratio has only been rendered possible thanks to our succesful definition of the differences between the two *genres.* The discovery of zero point does not imply that every book is either to the left or to the right of it. Books should not be marked by points but rather by strokes on our scale.

(4) *Terminology.* Lastly, I should like to come to some agreement on the terminology to be used in this book. My proposals are largely derived from Geach's *Reference and Generality.* The terms *subject* and *predicate* will be used as linguistic terms: not things but their names will be logical subjects. Not properties but their verbal expressions (called *attributes)* will be predicates. However, predicates are true of things, not of their names.

Subjects and predicates are the two constituent elements of *statements (*or *propositions);* and a statement or a proposition is expressed by a *sentence* in an ordinary language. A number of ingenious theories have been developed, in particular by Geach, Strawson and Quine, as to what the exact grammatical and/or logical differences between subject and predicate are. I will not enter into this matter, and the reader may adhere to whatever theory he prefers.

Names and *definite* or *identifying descriptions* will be said to refer to things in reality. With regard to what things exist in reality I will adhere to the Quinean view. If we agree with Quine that a theory (or form of discourse) is ontologically committed "to those and only those entities to which the bound variables of the theory must be capable of referring in order that the affirmations made in the theory be true"[19] and stipulate, furthermore, that we can refer to everything that exists, we will be permitted to refer to "objects" of which a definite description can only be given partly or exclusively by means of theoretical concepts (for instance, "this magnetical field", or "the GNP of nation N at t"). Predicates, on the other hand, will be said to *denote* what they are true of.

Every coherent system of sentences in an ordinary language (texts) will be either a narrative or a non-narrative text (sermons, statutes,

19. W.V. Quine, *From a logical point of view*, Cambridge 1971, p. 13-14.

libels, mathematical proofs). Every narrative text is either a narratio or it is not (poems, novels, epics, etc.); the line of demarcation between the two categories has been drawn in the preceding section. The narratio consists of sentences; I shall assume that all the sentences in the narratio show the prepositional structure and contain a subject and a predicate term. I admit that it can be plausibly doubted or even denied that narratios consist of only such sentences. There are a variety of sentences that do not show this prepositional structure, e.g. commands, propositions expressing scientific theories, propositions expressing identities, or - possibly[20] - containing relational predicates. I presuppose that these kind of sentences are not an essential ingredient in narratios and that all the relevant problems of the narratio can be studied satisfactorily when we consider only those sentences that show the prepositional structure. I am very well aware that this is an important decision. Unfortunately, I cannot justify it here. Only this book as a whole can do so: once the account of the narratio presented in this book proves to be acceptable this omission will be sufficiently justified. Lastly, I shall assume that the narratio contains *singular* statements only[21].

A statement in a narrative text has the form "x is ø". What is expressed by the statement written as "x is ø" will be called a *modification* (Leibnizian terminology). Taking the modification M ("x ig ø") we cannot say "M is a modification of x", at least, not if we intend that to mean that M is a kind of predicate of x (and I do not see how we could interpret this sentence differently). We can speak of the "ø -ness of x", or "x's being ø", we can even speak of the "x-eity of M" (in a way reminiscent of Scotus's "haecceitas"), but not of the "M-ness of x". M is not a property of x and "M" is not an attribute of x, because facts are not properties. However, the statements expressing facts will be said to be the properties of *narrative substances.* Narrative substances are the collections of those statements in a narratio that contain — in a way to be explained later on — the cognitive message of the narratio. When many statements in (part of) a narratio always have the same subject, this subject will be said to be the *narrative subject* of this (part of the) narratio.

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20. It has been argued by Russell and many others that propositions containing relational predicates do not have the subject-predicate form. See Russell; p. 13.
21. So-called "limited generalizations", i.e. generalizations which are restricted to specific times and places (e.g. "men wore wigs in Europe in the 18th century") should be dissolved into singular, constative statements and not be seen as universal statements.

CHAPTER II
THE IDEAL NARRATIO

Our inquiry into the nature of the narratio would be facilitated if we could establish what a narratio in its ideal form looks like. If it is possible to cleanse existing narratios of all their accidental contingencies and epiphenomena, the result of such a purification will be - we would hope - the narratio in its pure or "ideal" form. Then a simple inspection of this "ideal narratio" will yield all the relevant characteristics of the narratio we are looking for. In fact, many theorists of the narratio have adopted this "ideal narratio" approach. I propose to consider the results of their investigations in this chapter.

The procedure will be as follows. First I shall enumerate a number of "stipulative definitions"[1] of the narratio representing the intuitions of different authors concerning the "ideal narratio". Next, I shall try to determine the advantages and the deficiencies of these stipulative definitions.

(1) *The Narratio answers all question.* A first, rather naive, definition of the ideal narratio runs as follows: the ideal narratio is the narratio in which (implicitly or explicitly) an answer is given to all conceivable questions that may arise with regard to the subject-matter concerned. But then the narratio should provide a complete description of its subject-matter (see section (7) of this chapter for a further discussion of this requirement). To avoid this obviously unsatisfactory consequence and to give this definition at least a chance of success, we propose to distinguish between the "internal" and "external" questions to which a narratio may lead. "Internal questions" are questions evoked by the narratio itself; e.g. they may refer to possible inconsistencies in the narratio, or ask whether on the basis of the evidence adduced by the historian an interpretation different from the one proposed in the narratio should not be preferred. Internal questions can be posed only on the basis of something mentioned in the narratio itself; "external questions" may be formulated from any conceivable perspective. For instance, reading some general description of diplomatic and military events during the First World War, one may ask how much cheese was produced in Russia in 1915, while in this particular account of World War I there is no suggestion of cheese-production being at all relevant for an interpretation of the course of events. It will be hard to distinguish between these two kinds of questions in all cases but let us suppose that somewhere a dividing-line can be drawn. We can now eliminate the external questions, for as we shall see in section (7) it is not reasonable to expect a narratio to give an implicit or explicit answer to all the

1. Cf. R. Robinson, *Definition,* Oxford 1968; Robinson says on p. 19: "by "stipulative definition" I mean establishing or announcing or choosing one's own meaning for a word".

external questions it may give rise to. I do not know whether any philosopher of history has ever *expressis verbis* endorsed this view of the ideal narratio, but in his *Autobiography* Collingwood has come close to it. He wrote that for a correct interpretation of a text we should always be aware of the questions it was supposed to answer[2]. Thus there is a tendency to see a text (the narratio) as essentially a sequence of questions (implicitly of explicitly formulated in the text) and answers. We could infer from this view of the narratio the requirement that the ideal narratio should answer all its internal questions.

This definition is defective because it identifies the ideal narratio with the most persuasive narratio. The art of persuasion is the art of eliminating or answering beforehand all critical questions that might be posed. Of course, an element of persuasion should be present in each acceptable narratio for if a narratio leaves us with more questions than we had before reading it we have little reason to be content with it; therefore the proposal contains at least part of the truth just like all the other proposals to be discussed below. Nevertheless, the most persuasive narratio is not necessarily the best or the ideal one. We can easily conceive of two competing narratios on a specific subject-matter, the first giving a satisfactory answer to all its internal questions while avoiding all the important questions that can be asked on the subject-matter, whereas the other answers at least a number of these questions, although sometimes unconvincingly.

An example is furnished by the historiography of the persecution of witches. In the 19th century historians such as Lecky[3] believed that the persecution of witches was the consequence of the stupidity and the meanness of a superstitious clergy. This certainly was a consistent and persuasive explanation. Everyone familiar with the moral depravity of the clergy in the late Middle Ages was ready to accept that these unscrupulous and greedy men should quickly have discovered and exploited the mass-psychological opportunities offered by the persecution of witches. To use the terminology of the detective-story: motive, means and opportunity all seemed to be readily available once the paradigm of the greedy and superstitious clergy had been accepted. However, despite its persuasiveness and its capacity to forestall all subsequent questions, there are surely few historians who still favour this explanation. A few years ago Keith Thomas published his admirable book on the persecution of witches especially in England; he has shown that they were closely related to the late medieval process of demythologization of Catholic dogma. As the Church no longer wished to satisfy the layman's need for magic the common man now projected the magic power he used to associate with the secular clergy upon the

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2. See Collingwood (2); pp. 30 ff..
3. Reference is made to W.E.H. Lecky, *History of the rise and influence of the spirit of rationalism in Europe,* London 1865; the other book mentioned in this discussion is K. Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic,* New York 1971.

unfortunate creatures who were to become the witches of the late Middle Ages and of the 16th and 17th centuries. No doubt, this analysis of the persecution of witches is much less persuasive than its 19th century predessor: it raises a great many new and as yet unanswerable questions. Such as: why did the Church initiate a process of demythologization, why did the Church not block the new outlet chosen by a public desirous of magic, why was wichcraft so often associated with old women, and so on. Yet Keith Thomas undoubtedly provides a far better narratio of witchcraft than 19th century studies did. Of course, a narratio combinning Thomas's sophistication with the persuasiveness of Lecky's account would be even more convincing. But the state of the historiography on witchcraft being what it now is, we prefer the less persuasive analysis to the more persuasive one. So our example shows that the best or ideal narratio is not necessarily the most persuasive narratio. Hence we have to reject the first proposal for a definition of the ideal narratio.

(2) *The Pragmatist's Proposal.* According to this proposal the function of narratios is to facilitate our orientation in the world; consequently, the ideal narratio is said to be the narratio that is the most reliable guide for our actions. Let us imagine the following situation. A tells B a "narratio" of what happened at meeting M_1 where B was absent. Later on, B has to preside over the same company at meeting M_2 and wants to obtain its support for purpose P. The "ideal narratio" to be told by A to B of what happened at M_1 should provide B with sufficient information in order to have P supported at M_2. This is the suggestion behind the pragmatist's proposal. However, a serious difficulty may arise. If one or more members of the board have changed their minds during the period between M_1 and M_2 the value of A's "narratio" decreases considerably. In that case A's narratio — if B adheres to it — may even prove to be a stumbling-block instead of the useful guide it was meant to be. So the pragmatist's proposal seems to be a sensible one only in so far as the past (described in the narratio) and the present or the future (in which we act) are similar. Because the reason for the writing of history consists in showing where the past differs from the present, the pragmatist's proposal seems to deny the very *raison d'etre* of historiography.

But the pragmatist may point out that he has something quite different in mind. In his opinion the historian whose analysis covers a considerable span of time is in a better position than anybody else to go beyond the limitations of his own time and to see things in a historical perspective. He can interpret the present as the outcome of an evolution, a gradual process of historical change. Such a long-term view enables him to give his more hodiecentric contemporaries useful advice for political and social action. History can be compared with a book; the historian knows the contents of the book up to a certain point (the present), so he will make the best predictions on the outcome of the book. Being familiar with the general line of the story, he knows — as far as the present is

concerned — how to separate the essential from the circumstantial. Thanks to his knowledge of the past he is capable of laying the soundest possible foundation for present and future action. One could think, in this connection, of Tocqueville's *De la Démocratic en Amérique* or Elias's *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation.* Consequently, the ideal narratio can be said to be the narratio that proves to be the most reliable guide for present and future action. Here the value of history as a guide for action does not spring from the similarity of past and present, as in the example of the meeting, but precisely from their dissimilarity.

There are a number of difficulties. Firstly, we may object that the extrapolation of historical trends into the future is a very risky procedure. The pragmatist may agree with this objection but will point out that this agreement does not contradict his proposal: he merely has to concede that it is not in the present but only in the future that we can decide which narratio was the ideal one. Next there is the problem of how to translate the knowledge contained in books like that of Tocqueville or Elias into present or future action. Even if we are warned against certain political dangers it does not mean that we always know how to avoid them. But let us assume for the sake of argument that such practical problems can be solved. A more serious problem is this. The pragmatist's definition of the ideal narratio did not mention any ethical standards. Yet I strongly doubt whether the pragmatist can dispense with such standards. Does not the decision as to what is the best guide for action at least partly depend upon ethical criteria? If so, the search for the ideal narratio will have no chance of success as long as we do not know for certain what ethical rules we ought to obey. However, the pragmatist will answer that ethical standards determine which goals we will set ourselves; to assess, on the other hand, which narratio, which guide for action is best suited for attaining these moral goals, does not necessarily require ethical standards. Similarly, if someone uses scientific theories for some evil purpose, it cannot be said that these scientific theories were a poor guide for his actions. Unfortunately, our having every reason to assert the contrary is nearer to the truth.

However, if a politician such as Lenin, Stalin of Hitler pursues some morally disreputable line of political action and — as is very often the case — appeals to history to justify his policy, we feel strongly inclined not only to express our moral disagreement with his moral goals but also to state, that this politician has found the wrong guide in history. Because our moral point of view is different, we also tend to reject his view on history. Apparently, unlike scientific views, views on history are never merely instrumental in obtaining a morally inspired goal, but they are always materially co-determined by (these) moral goals. Our moral ideals influence what we see in the past. The reverse is also true: our knowledge of the past partly determines the moral goals we strive for. Our view on the past and our moral goals are much more intricately linked together than in the case of scientific knowledge. The reason probably is, that scientific knowledge shows us that there are a number of

possible courses of actions, whereas historical knowledge rather makes us aware of the *limitations* of our capacity to organize our social world. Scientific knowledge increases the number of ethical and political goals we can opt for; historical knowledge, on the other hand, narrows down this number and thus rather suggests the selection rather than the production of ethical and political values.

No doubt the pragmatist will advance the following time-honoured argument Every view on the past may contain two elements: 1) a factual analysis of the past, 2) an ethical interpretation of these facts. In theory both elements can always be distinguished. Insuperable disagreements in the field of historiography concern the ethical and not the factual part of historiography: accounts of the past. But it is possible to restrict historiography exclusively to its factual component; consequently narratios can be written that are equally acceptable to the adherents of different ethical positions. So we can conceive of a number of value-free narratios and decide, next, which of them is the best guide for action.

However, even if the possibility of such value-free narratios is taken for granted — which is, I believe, a very generous concession — it is unlikely that ethical and political values can be left out of consideration when we have to decide which narratio provides us with the best guide for action. Ethical and political ideals inspire to the conception of different wished-for future worlds, each with a corresponding preference for a specific kind of narratio on the past, even when these are all supposed to be value-free. Whoever wants to realize the ethical goal G will be interested in narratios on the past written from the perspective of G. Marxists and liberals learn entirely different lessons from the past and consequently they will present different accounts of the past in their attempts to argue for these lessons. Thus, because of the different ideals we may have concerning the future, we shall necessarily end up with different answers to the question as to what interpretation of the past is the best guide for action. Therefore, discussions on this questions will unavoidably drag us into the morass of ethical discussion. I emphasize that it was different views on the future that impeded general agreement on what is the best interpretation of the past. I do not believe that it is a priori impossible to decide on the relative merits of narratios on the past that have been inspired by different ethical and political values. I refer to Chapter VIII, section (4) for a discussion of this problem.

Despite its shortcomings, it cannot be denied that the pragmatist's proposal does have some more inviting aspects. We do not act in a vacuum, but always in a historical context; so up to a certain point, knowledge of the past is indispensable for rational action. Thus, it is not wholly unreasonable to say that the rationality of our actions gives some indication of the adequacy of our insight into the past. But as we have seen, knowledge of the past does not solve everything: moral goals will be necessary although they may wither away into a few vague and universally acceptable moral rules (such as the wish to avoid wars or social clashes and so on) when society becomes more complex.

This consideration explains, perhaps, why the pragmatist's proposal has had so many adherents. No doubt Nietzsche was its most extreme defender. He strongly insisted that the historian should serve Life — "das Leben" — that is, present and future action and to that end should not even recoil from tampering with the truth[4]. In the twenties and thirties of this century a number of so-called "presentist" historians, foremost among whom were Beard and Becker[5], agreed with Croce that historiography inevitably is and should be (the "is" and the "should be" very often go together in their discussions) determined by "present needs and interests". In their opinion it is the historian's task to write in such a way as to show people living now how to solve their social and political problems. More recently roughly the same line of argument has been defended by the philosophers of the Frankfurter Schule seeking to reunite theory and praxis. In their opinion sociological and historical knowledge (theory) shows us unambiguously what social reality is like and, therefore, how we have to act (praxis). They even maintain that such knowledge itself is instrumental in realizing the future, for knowledge of what exists changes what is known[6]. In a somewhat clearer manner the same point has recently been made by Howard Zinn[7] who advocates a "radical history", which critically exposes the cruelties and the ideologies of the past, so that we may learn how to act in order to achieve a better and more human future.

(3) *The simplest narratio.* The third proposal for a definition of the ideal narratio runs as follows: the ideal narratio is the simplest, most elementary narratio. The proposal suggests that the narratio is a kind of narrative molecule composed of a set of narrative "atoms". These "atoms" are the most fundamental entities in the narratio and we should study them in order to obtain adequate knowledge of the narratio.

My problem with this proposal is that we do not really recognize items functioning as "narrative atoms" in the narratios we encounter in

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4. When emphasizing the creative grasp of the historian Nietzsche tends to speak with contempt of "die gemeine empirische Wahrheit". See F. Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historic für das Leben,* Stuttgart 1970 (Reclam); p. 58.
5. "Presentism" was defined by Carl Becker in 1912 as "the imperative command that knowledge shall serve purpose and learning be applied to the solution of the problems of human life". Quoted in H. Zinn, *The politics of history,* Boston 1970; p. 17.
6. The demands of the "kritische Theorie" have been elaborated by Groh for historiography. He says: "diese Geschichtswissenschaft geht aus von der Einheit von Erkenntnis und Interesse, vom Prinzip der Vermittlung der Theorie durch Praxis. Sie unterstellt jedoch nicht die Theorie dem Primat der politischen Praxis oder die politische Praxis der Gängelung durch Begriff und Theorie. Andererseits erkennt sie aber auch, dass der Theorie Praxis noch als theoretisches Moment zugerechnet werden muss, da kritische Theorie nur durch emanzipatorische Praxis abgeschlossen werden kann". See D. Groh, *Kritische Geschichtswissenschaft in emanzipatorischer Absicht,* Stuttgart 1973; p. 19.
7. The programme for a "radical history" is circumscribed in H. Zinn, *The politics of history,* Boston 1970; p. 35 ff..

historiography. Do we come across a great number of self-sufficient "narrative atoms", adroitly arranged, when reading a narratio? I do not think so. From the individual sentence to the narratio taken as a whole we do not come across very obvious breaks; metaphorically speaking, we wander through a continuous density. Moreover, the problems historians have to struggle with in constructing their narratios lie at the macrolevel rather than at the microlevel introduced by this proposal. Therefore, its prospects are not bright. This will become clear when we examine a further specification of this model.

(4) *The CLM-ist's proposal.* This proposal is based on the idea that, the narratio being a kind of argument, the ideal narratio should be a very well-knit argument that every reasonable reader is forced to accept. It enjoys considerable popularity among narrativists; in fact the first interpretation of the narratio after Walsh's and Gallie's analysis of the narratio runs along these lines. The argumentative element of the narratio is identified with a logical structure supposedly present in all narratios. The well-known "covering law model" (CLM) is thought to represent this logical structure; as a consequence, the narratio is associated exclusively with its explanatory function. In order to illustrate this proposal I will now expound the views of M. White and A.C. Danto.

White draws a distinction between "chronicle" and "history"[8]. The chronicle gives a factual account, not only of events but also of conditions of a more general character, such as the material circumstances under which people lived in the past. The facts mentioned in the "chronicle" are causally related by "history". The chronicle answers questions like "and what happened then?", history answers questions like "what was the significance of this event, that is, how can it be causally related to certain other events?" If the narratio taken as a whole is to be "true", two requirements should be met: 1) the facts mentioned in the narratio should be accurately described in it, 2) only on the basis of well-confirmed empirical laws may the causal relation between the facts mentioned in the narratio be said to exist. The narratio (chronicle and history together) thus has the following form: A → B → C → D ...etc, where "A", "B", "C", "D" etc. denote particular facts. In every phase of the narratio one resorts, usually only by implication (cf. Hempel's "explanation sketches")[9], to the "covering laws": a → b, b → c, c → d, etc., where "a", "b", "c", "d" etc. refer to the class of phenomena to which A, B, C, D etc. respectively belong[10]. And for the narratio to be true, both the truth of the statements describing the facts and the validity of the "covering laws" are required.

Danto's analysis of the narratio bears a close resemblance to these ideas of White's. Danto like White, does not see the narratio as a

8. M. White; pp. 222 ff.
9. C.G. Hempel, The function of general laws in history, in id., *Aspects of scientific explanation,* New York 1965; p. 238.
10. It should be noted that the implication-sign in "a → b" expresses an empirical claim, while "A → B" expresses a logical implication.

totality but as a complex of — what he calls —, "narrative sentences". The properties of the narratio can only be determined by a study of the narrative sentences that make up the narratio. Danto's book is essentially an attempt to establish how the present-bound perspective of the historian is responsible for the content of the narratio and for the way in which those individual narrative sentences are formulated. Much of what Danto says on that subject is, in my opinion, sound and valuable, although he sometimes has a tendency to overstate his case[11]. Nevertheless, I will not go into this aspect of Danto's theory of history, because it is of no consequence to the present investigation.

What do, in Danto's view, narrative sentences and the narratios formed by them look like? In general we can be sure, Danto says, that narrative sentences report the beginning and the end of a process of change of a specific object that more or less remains itself during the period of change. In its most elementary form, therefore, the narratio will have the following appearance: (1) x is F at t_1; (2) H happens at t_2; (3) x is G at t_3. A narratio of this form is called by Danto a "narrative argument", Danto emphasizes that such a narrative atom can be easily rewritten in the form of a deductive explanation as defined by the CLM. He agrees with Scriven that the covering laws used in the narrative argument will often be little more than "truisms" and can be omitted in the exposition of the argument in the narratio. What is so fascinating in history, and what makes history differ from the sciences, is the attempt of the historian to describe the past in such a way that the events mentioned can be causally related by Scriven's truisms precisely in the descriptions that introduce them in the narratio[12].

It is not astonishing that Danto sees important similarities between narrative arguments and deductive explanations (in conformity with the CLM). In both cases we find (1) that the object of change remains more or less the same, (2) that it is not permissible that the conclusion contains more than the premisses, (3) that it is permissible to add premisses irrelevant to the narrative argument or the deductive explanation themselves. On the other hand - and it is here that the views of White and Danto diverge — there is, according to Danto, also an important disparity between the narrative argument and the deductive explanation.

A narrative argument consisting of: (1) a thing s is in state A, (2) event e exerts some causal influence upon s, (3) as a result of which s is in state B, may schematically be represented as: "$\overset{A}{/}\cdot\overset{B}{/}$". Thus we can conceive of the following molecular argument $\overset{A}{/}\cdot\overset{B}{/}\cdot\overset{C}{/}\cdot\overset{D}{/}$, which mentions a) three events e_1, e_2 and e_3 causing changes in s and b) the three states B, C and D brought about by these events. It is Danto's contention that " in a molecular narrative, each unit /./ is covered by a general law

11. A number of Danto's views on the nature of his "narrative sentences" has been effectively criticized by M.G. Murphey, *Our knowledge of the historical past,* New York 1973; pp. 113 ff..
12. Danto; p. 252.

(...), but there need not be any general law which covers the entire change"[13]. We can only explain how s came to be in state D when we take into account the individual changes caused by each of the individual events e_1, e_2 and e_3. After e_1 took place we had no reason whatsoever to expect that e_2 would happen and the same is true for e_2 and e_3. Hence, s's being in state D cannot be explained by a general law of the type (x) (Ax → Dx). Danto concludes from this that when we deal with molecular narrative arguments, narrative arguments and deductive explanations are no longer analogous.

I agree with Danto that there is no general law (x) (Ax → Dx), but neither are there laws of the type (x) (Ax → Bx), (x) (Bx → Cx) etc. as Danto seems to believe. It is e_1 and not s's being in state A which causes s to be B. There *are* laws of the type (x) (Px → Bx, (x) (Qx → Cx) etc. where "P", "Q" etc. refer to the facts that e_1, e_2 etc. have happened to s. Obviously, *these* laws do not validate a more comprehensive one that subsumes them all.

On the other hand, Danto contradicts his previous assertion that no such comprehensive law is possible by rightly pointing out that we can conceive of a general law of the following type: (x) ($P_{t-3}x$ & $Q_{t-2}x$ & R_{t-3} x → $D_t x$), where the indices t-3, t-2 etc. indicate the temporal order in which the events e_1, e_2 etc. have manifested themselves. Of course *this* general law can be used in a deductive explanation of s's being D at t. Thus even Danto's own account allows for deductive explanations analogous to narrative arguments. It is true that Danto's analysis of the narratio is more subtle than White's: Danto inserts a kind of breathing-space between the individual phases of a process of change. As a consequence his account allows for the influence of causes operating "from the outside", as it were. According to White's description of the narratio each phase in a process of change is *itself* the cause of the phase following it. And this is unrealistic. However, as we have seen, even Danto's philosophy of the narratio doe? not succeed in emancipating narrative arguments from deductive explanations: it is always possible to translate the one into the other and vice versa. In the end, therefore, Danto's and White's positions are equal. Danto's account of the narratio is a refinement of White's, but not a radical departure from it.

A number of objections can be raised regarding these attempts to construct the ideal narratio along the lines of the CLM. In the first place there is the problem of the subject of change that is supposed to remain more or less the same during the change. This requirement is plausible enough as long as we are dealing with the rather commonplace examples used by Danto (like most philosophers) to illustrate his thesis. Indeed, a car or a table can be said to be the same car or table after being damaged. Although, even here, as recent discussions on "identity through change" suggest, one easily gets involved in a host of complicated problems

13. Danto; Chapter XI.

regarding which there exists more disagreement than consensus[14]. But what about, for instance, Germany between 1815 and 1871 when it changed from a purely geographical notion into a fully integrated nation-state? Is there only one subject of change, or two, or — possibly — thirty-nine, thirty-nine being the number of German states left after the reorganization of Germany by Napoleon and the Vienna Congress? And if we opt for two subjects of change what, then, has become of one of them by 1875 when apparently only one of the two has survived? Has the other simply disappeared? I will not go further into this matter now, because in Chapter V it will be analyzed more thoroughly than is possible at the present stage.

Secondly, almost everything hinges on the acceptability of the CLM. I have no intention of discussing extensively the advantages and the shortcomings of the CLM as an explanatory model. The literature on the CLM written since Hempel's famous article of 1942 has assumed such dimensions that such a discussion would require little less than a sizable volume. It will be sufficient to state here that the value of the CLM as an explanatory model for the exact sciences has already been called into question lately. The CLM demands that a deductive relation should exist between explanans and explanandum; but it appears that this relation is absent in many explanations that scientists accept without demur[15]. In consequence of the looseness and the ambiguity of the concepts used by historians, this gap between explanans and explanandum is even greater in history. In spite of his professed adherence to the CLM, Danto is quite ready to admit this [16].

Thirdly, the covering laws which the historian is supposed to apply when he explains the past in the way stated by the CLM have a very shaky foundation and generally allow of numerous exceptions. A substantial part of the discussions on the CLM is concerned with the question of how the covering laws demanded by the CLM could best be made more flexible in order to agree with historiographical practice. To that end, Gardiner introduced his so-called "porous generalizations" that permit "a broad margin of exceptional cases"[17], Rescher and Joynt invented the "limited generalizations" that are "rooted in transitory regularities, deriving from the existence of temporally restricted technological and institutional patterns"[18], and much energy has been devoted to a variety of

14. The identity through change of cars and tables is most often defended by the invocation of spatio-temporal continuity. It has, however, been argued that spatio-temporal continuity is an unreliable criterion, cf. J. Nelson. The view which is diametrically opposed to Nelson's, i.e. the view that a thing may remain the same thing even if it is subject to the most catastrophic changes, has been defended by Mrs. Price.
15. E.g. Hesse; p. 258.
16. Danto shows that some historical phenomenon we have come across in the past and want to explain (the "explanandum") can most often only be explained in some very general description of that phenomenon. Cf. Danto; pp. 220 ff..
17. P. Gardiner, The nature of historical explanation, Oxford 1968; p. 93.
18. C.B. Joynt and N. Rescher, The problem of uniqueness in history, in G.H. Nadel,

statistic and probabilistic interpretations of the CLM[19]. It has even been argued that in most cases the covering laws applied by historians have no empirical content at all[20]. It is astonishing that in spite of these difficulties with the CLM philosophers should have been so reluctant to abandon the model. For, although a remarkable Collingwood-revival can be observed in recent years, I think most philosophers of history in the analytic tradition are still adherents of some form of the CLM. Even the fact that most working historians have always condemned these discussions on covering laws as rather foolish has done little to alter this state of affairs.

I admit that the CLM is not likely to be ever conclusively rejected. Models like the CLM are a kind of "legislations" for the way in which historiographies ought to be constructed rather than reconstructions of how history actually is written. And one cannot refute a law by not obeying it. This is, by the way, the reason why I speak of the CLM in this chapter and not at a later stage when I shall expound my own proposal for a system of narrative logic and possible alternatives are considered (see Chapter V and VI). The CLM-ist does not start his interpretation of the narratio by accepting the narratio as it actually is, in order to establish some system of narrative logic[21]. He follows the opposite route, which, admittedly, is a much easier one to take. Philosophers like Popper, Hempel, Mandelbaum, White Danto and many others borrowed the model from formal logic ("modus ponens") and the philosophy of the exact sciences, convinced as they are that formal logic and the reasoning in the exact sciences are the sole depositors of the rules for valid argument. Next they tried to cram the narratio into this model. Since then, philosophical writing on the nature of the historical explanation has been like an attempt to cover a double bed with a single-bed sheet: every effort to get things right in one place has caused something to go wrong somewhere else.

Let us suppose for the sake of argument that the CLM will eventually prove to be an acceptable explanatory model for most of the sciences. Even then, White's and Danto's attempt to characterize the narratio in terms of the CLM has little to recommend itself. According to the analysis proposed by White and Danto, the cognitive heart of the narratio lies in a

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Studies in the philosophy of history, New York 1965; pp. 8-11.

19. E.g. Nagel; pp. 555-558.
20. See M. Scriven, Truisms as the grounds for historical explanations, in Gardiner ed., *Theories of history,* New York 1959. In this article Scriven argues that the covering laws used by historians are immune to falsification, because they always have the following form: if the conditions mentioned in the antecedens of the law have been *sufficiently* satisfied, the consequence follows. Thanks to the qualification "sufficiently" in the historian's covering laws, all counterexamples can be ruled out as irrelevant.
21. Weingartner has argued that the adherents of the CLM and their adversaries mostly talked at cross-purposes because of their different starting points. See R.H. Weingarter, The quarrel about historical explanation, in R.H. Nash, *Ideas of history,* New York 1969.

relation between the sentences that make up the narratio (i.e. in their being causally relatable — as far as the facts mentioned in them are concerned). The CLM does not require anything specific with regard to the content of the sentences of the narratio. Of course this is not quite correct: the content of the individual sentences should be such that they can be deductively related by means of general statements. But in the view of the CLM-ist the content of these sentences is rather a kind of variable, for which anything can be substituted as long as the deductive structure of the CLM is not violated. It is, however, not difficult to show that this is hardly an adequate condition for constructing a narratio that satisfies even our most modest demands.

Let us take simple narratio that conforms to the CLM-ist's requirements and consists of the fact-mentioning statements, A, B and C. Suppose A, B and C mention the facts a, b and c respectively. Suppose, furthermore, that A, B and C can be mutually related in a CLM structure by means of the following covering laws: (x) ($\alpha x \rightarrow \beta x$) and (x) ($\beta x \rightarrow \gamma x$) where α, β and γ denote the kind of phenomena to which respectively, the events a, b and c belong. We can substitute for sentence B any sentence (or set of sentences) B' if only the fact b' mentioned in (the set of) sentence(s) B' belongs to the class of events denoted by β. It is not hard to contrive an example to contradict the CLM-ist's claim. Suppose that sentence A describes Hitler's decision to invade the Netherlands in 1940, while sentence B states that German soldiers cross the Dutch frontiers and occupy the Netherlands, and sentence C that parts of the Netherlands are destroyed during the hostilities. It is simple to bring this narratio in line with the CLM-scheme: the relevant covering laws can easily be reconstructed by the reader and we may reasonably suppose that they are well-confirmed. We can replace B by a description B' of the neuro-physiological condition of the German soldiers who took part in the invasion of the Netherlands. Then B' contains a description 1) of the neuro-physiological state of the German soldiers as a consequence of Hitler's marching orders and b) of the neuro-physiological processes in the soldier's brains that initiated their actions aimed at the destruction of parts of the Netherlands. Perhaps one should go into further detail and investigate the exact relation between the descriptions under a) and b), but I do not think this is necessary. Anyway, after substituting B' for B (which is permissible according to the CLM-ist interpretation of the narratio) we get a very odd narratio starting with a story concerning Hitler's plans to attack the Netherlands, Belgium and France, then dishing up a ridiculous aside on the neuro-physiological condition of German soldiers and ending with an account of the bombardment of Rotterdam. It will be obvious that although every phase of this would-be "narratio" can be causally related to what preceded and what followed, we are left with a hybrid piece of language utterly unacceptable as a narratio. So we may safely conclude that for something to be a narratio, the condition that it should conform to the CLM is insufficient.

Neither is conformity with the CLM a necessary condition for a certain piece of language to be a narratio. We can easily conceive of a perfectly

intelligible narratio that nevertheless does not show a CLM-structure as stipulated by White and Danto. I agree with Haskell Fain who advanced a sufficiently convincing argument to that effect. Take the following four-stage micro narratio (I admit that this narratio is an extremely simple one, but if such a simple narratio does not need a CLM-structure, the CLM-ist's requirements are even less plausible for ordinary, more complex narratios): (1) Mr. Smith opened the garage doors, (2) he started up the engine of his car, (3) he drove out of the garage, (4) he got out of his car and closed the garage doors behind him[22]. Nobody will contest that this narratio, although it is short, is perfectly acceptable. And Fain rightly concludes: "after Mr. Smith of the story opened the garage doors, he started up the engine. It is perfectly plain that the relationship between those two incidents in the story is not that of cause and effect. Opening the garage doors did not, causally speaking, start the engine (though it could have startled the dog). Incidents of a story *may* be causally related, but narrative coherence between episodes can be achieved in the absence of causal connection between incidents"[23]. Maybe a Danto-ist philosopher of history will not be wholly convinced by this example and Fain's conclusion. He may reply that all Mr. Smith's actions do causally depend upon his intention to drive his car into the street. He will propose therefore the strictly causal explanation: (1) every car-driver who wants to leave his garage without damaging his car or his garage will successively perform the actions a to n, (2) Mr. Smith wants to drive his car into the street without damaging his car or his garage, so it follows that Mr. Smith will perform the actions mentioned in the sentences (1) to (4).

I do not think that the CLM-ist's objection is fatal to Fain's position. One should realize that it is a *teleological* argument that the CLM-ist rewrites in terms of the CLM. Firstly, the CLM-ist is probably mistaken in expecting a teleological argument to do the work for him: adherents of the so-called "Logical Connection Argument" such as A. Donagan, G.H. von Wright and F.A. Olafson have insisted that there is an essential difference between teleological arguments and the CLM[24]. But in his brilliant study R. Martin has effectively questioned this view, so I shall not go into this objection here[25]. I draw the reader's attention to the fact that narratios only rarely and certainly not typically have a teleological character. Therefore, it may be possible in some cases to rewrite a narratio in terms of the CLM, but more often than not this is impossible. If we say for instance that the French Revolution runs from the noble revolt in 1788 to the downfall of

22. Fain; p. 283.
23. Fain; p. 302.
24. According to Von Wright, the general rule in accordance with which teleological or intentional explanations are given is not an empirical but a logical rule. His argument is that one cannot verify the antecedens of this rule without verifying the consequence and vice versa. See Von Wright; especially pp. 115 ff.
25. Martin; pp. 173 ff. See Ankersmit (2) for a detailed discussion of the views of Von Wright and Martin on teleological explanation and the Logical Connection Argument.

Robespierre in 1794, then the downfall of Robespierre certainly is the *end* of the French Revolution (and the last episode to be mentioned in a narratio on the French Revolution) but decidedly not its goal. A general hypothesis relating the goal and the means of attaining the goal (as intended by the general hypothesis mentioned under (1) in the preceding paragraph) supplemented by the premiss that someone or something wants to attain the goal, constitutes in general an insufficient basis for structuring the narratio simply because historical phenomena usually have no goal. It may be observed, incidentally, that even where a translation into a (teleological) CLM *is* possible, the resulting translation has a lack of precision which makes it much less attractive than the original narratio. Look again at Mr. Smith and his car. The original narratio differentiated clearly between the phases (1) to (4) and was probably supposed to do just that; the CLM-ist rendering of the original narratio, on the contrary, casually lumps these four phases together into an indefinite catalogue without paying attention to each phase separately.

How, then, we may ask, can "narrative coherence between episodes be achieved" in the narratio? The answer is given, according to Fain, by the traditional speculative philosophies of history. We should see the historical past as a thick, massive pipe, consisting of several layers, each corresponding to a particular speculative philosophy of history. Thus, there is the layer of intellectual history that got its *raison d'être* with Hegel's philosophy of history (all history is the history of the Idea striving for its self-realization), there is the layer of economic history based on Marx's speculative interpretation of history (all history is the history of the dialectical struggle between the *Produktivkräfte* and the *Produktionsverhältnisse*[26]) and so on. Corresponding to each speculative philosophy of history there is a particular intersection through the "thickness" of history - as Fain maintains - so that all the incidents within a particular intersection can be narratively related. So the speculative philosophies of history steer the historian through the chaos of the historical past and show him which incidents (events) he has to select so that a narrative coherence between those incidents can be achieved. Similar ideas have been put forward by Munz in his recent book[27] .

This is a very interesting proposal that certainly contains more than a kernel of truth: if a historian were to jump arbitrarily through these different layers his narratio would lack all intelligibility. Nevertheless as anyone who has read historical studies knows, historians in fact move

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26. For a very clear and convincing exposition of Marx's ideas on the relation between the *Producktivkräfte* and the *Produktionsverhältnisse* see W.H. Shaw, *Marx's theory of history,* Stanford 1978; especially Chapter 1.
27. Just as Fain Munz assigns to speculative philosophies of history the task of indicating which aspects of the past can be meaningfully related. See Munz (2); p. 252: "the real purpose of a philosophy of history is (...) to increase the number of intelligible relationships".

with considerable freedom through these different layers and probably the best historical writing is that in which this is done most successfully. I think, therefore, that something is wrong with Pain's metaphysical "Schichten"-theory. It should be noted that there is an ominous resemblance between Fain's theory and Descartes' doctrine of the two substances. Descartes argued that there were two substances to which ultimately all our statements about reality could be reduced ("res cogitans" and "res extensa"); Fain likewise postulates the existence of a number of metaphysical layers in the historical past that cannot be reduced to one another. It is therefore to be expected that Fain's "historical Cartesianism" is open to the kind of criticism that has recently been formulated - for instance by Ryle or Strawson - regarding the Cartesian body-mind dichotomy. It could be pointed out that historians use a great number of what may be called "saddle concepts" (such as "revolution", "colonialism", "socialism" and so on) that belong to different metaphysical layers at one and the same time. Apparently, the separation between the layers is not so clear-cut as Fain wishes us to believe.

Let us return to our discussion of the CLM-ist's interpretation of the narratio. From the foregoing we may conclude that being in conformity with the CLM is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for a piece of language to be an acceptable narratio: we can conceive of a set of sentences that satisfies the CLM-ist's requirements and is nevertheless not a narratio; on the other hand we have found — with Fain — that there are many intelligible narratios that do not show a clear CLM-structure. Of course I am ready to admit that *some* narratios do have the CLM-structure; but to infer from this that a CLM-structure always *is* or *should* be present if a set of sentences is to be an intelligible narratio, is a step we are not permitted to take. Such a move would in many respects be similar to supposing that reality actually is as cubists usually tend to represent it; but even if a consistent application of the cubist's view of reality should eventually come exceedingly close to how we see reality, this would not justify the claim that forms in physical reality really are square-like. Therefore, the CLM-ist's thesis that *all* narratios should ultimately show a CLM-structure, because such a structure is present in (parts of) some narratios, is a fine example of what we might call — if I may coin this term - "methodological metaphysics"; that is, the same sort of unreasonable preference for a certain methodological model which ordinary metaphysics has always had for one specific aspect of reality. This is not the way an unprejudiced philosopher should proceed. He ought not to be satisfied with a methodological model (such as the CLM) that is so little in conformity with actual historiographical practice. We may conclude, then, that we should reject the CLM as a model for the ideal narratio.

Finally, I recall that this discussion on the virtues of the CLM as a model for the ideal narratio started with the hypothesis that there is some resemblance between narratios and arguments and that the argumentative

element thought to be present in narratios might be identified with the logical structure of the CLM. However, it is highly doubtful whether such a hypothesis is satisfactory and whether such a similarity between narratios and arguments does in fact exist. Unlike arguments, narratios have endings but no conclusions. The ending of a narratio is not a kind of shorthand of what was told before; nor is it possible to reconstruct a number of premisses that would lead up to the ending of the narratio in the way this can be done in an argument. Suppose we want to know the energy exercized by an electrical field around a charge Q when this field pushes a charge q form P_1 (at r_1 from Q) to P_2 (at r_2 from Q). With the help of the integral-calculus we can establish that this energy $W = f_O qQ \left(\frac{1}{r_1} - \frac{1}{r_2}\right)$, where f_O is a constant. What I wish to stress is that for an interpretation of the formula just mentioned we do not need to know how it can be proved. Anyone who knows what the variables stand for can work with this formula even if he does not know how it can be derived. Knowledge of the "argument" that leads up to the formula is, so to speak, irrelevant to the meaning of the "conclusion" of the "argument" (i.e. the equation for W). This is definitely not the case when we are dealing with narratios. In so far as we can say that a narratio has a conclusion (and most narratios do not have one in the proper sense of the word) such conclusions are rarely, if ever, "detachable" from the narratio as a whole (Mink). Take for instance the well-known Pirenne-thesis, that from an economic point of view the Middle Ages do not start until the 8th century. This thesis cannot be "detached" from the whole of Pirenne's book[28]; for a proper interpretation of the thesis we have to know Pirenne's book fairly well, and every time a historian comments on it or uses it he will have to leaf through the book. If, then, arguments have "detachable" conclusions, whereas narratios cannot be "detached" or isolated from their conclusions (if any), it seems wrong to suppose that narratios should essentially be a special kind of argument.

One last objection of an altogether different kind can be made to the CLM-ist's proposal. When discussing historical explanation Scriven writes: "that an explanation is essentially a linkage of what we do not understand to what we do understand"[29]. It might be argued, however, that the historian's task is not to render familiar what is strange or unknown to us but to do precisely the reverse. This typically his-torist view has been defended by M. Foucault and will also be supported in this study. In the course of this book I shall attempt to show that the historian's language is essentially an instrument that estranges us from our own or our cultural identity. Real historical insight is not gained by reducing the past to knowledge we already have here and now (e.g. the theories of the social sciences) but by deepening the gap between the past and the present as much as we can.

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28. Mink (1); pp. 638 ff.
29. M. Scriven, Truisms as the grounds for historical explanations. P. Gardiner, *Theories of history,* New York, 1959; p. 449.

(5) *Mink's proposal.* The next proposal for a definition of the ideal narratio has been taken from the perspicacious and stimulating writings of L.O. Mink on the narratio. According to Mink, in the narratio historical events and conditions are seen together, synoptically, in one single, cognitive grasp[30]. What is separate in the past itself has to be caught by the historian in the unifying synopsis of the historical narratio.

How can such a synopsis be attained? Mink mentions three different ways in which we can order our experiences (he calls them "modes of comprehension") viz: 1) the categorical, 2) the theoretical and 3) the configurational mode.[31] The categorical mode of comprehension gives the conceptual framework for recognizing different things as belonging to the same category; the theoretical mode of comprehension tries to subsume incongruous phenomena under one and the same theory (even if they belong to different categories from the point of view of the first mode). For instance, within the second mode of comprehension the rusting of iron and the burning of a piece of paper are phenomena covered by one and the same theory (the theory of oxidation in this case). The configurational mode of comprehension — and this is the mode characteristic of the writing of history — is quite different from the first two modes. Here we have a synoptic seeing together of things that from the perspective of the first two modes (to which the protagonists of the socio-scientific approach to history would like to restrict historiographical representation) would seem entirely incompatible.

This synopsis can be realized within the configurational mode of comprehension, Mink says, when the individual narrative components of a narratio fit together "configurationally", just like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Such a configurational fitting together of all the different narrative components can be achieved when one tries as much as possible to link the (sets of) sentences of the narratio to one another within "a network of overlapping descriptions"[32]. Mink's intention may be clarified by means of the following example mentioned by Mink himself. Take the phrase "A accepts an offer"; this statement only makes sense when an offer has previously been made to A. Because the description of someone (in this case A) accepting an offer always presupposes the offer's having been made, the description of A's accepting an offer overlaps a description of the situation in which the offer to A was made. Therefore, Mink considers the phrase "accepts an offer" to be a "typical story-statement" (as contrasted with, for instance, "sending a telegram"). Thanks to its implicit reference to events not explicitly mentioned in the utterance itself, these "story-statements" possess a kind of "unsaturatedness" (my term) that makes them natural links in a narrative chain of "overlapping descriptions". The interlocking descriptions link the individual (sets of) sentences together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. It is obvious that

30. Mink (2); pp. 184 ff.
31. Mink (3); pp. 550 ff.
32. Mink (3); p. 556.

the ideal narratio is, from this perspective, the narratio whose individual constituent parts fit together best.

I think that this proposal for the definition of the ideal narratio will fail because it is based upon an inadequate, though interesting, attempt to characterize the narratio. Is Mink's theory on the role of this "network of overlapping descriptions" really an acceptable model for the narratio? I do not think so. It seems to me that Mink's theory demands both too little and too much. Let us start with the "too little". The old-testamental genealogy: "Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot Juda and his brother, Juda begot Perez and Zerah of Thamar, Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram, Ram begot ... etc." can be transposed as follows: "Isaac was the son of Abraham, Jacob was the son of Isaac, Juda was the son of Jacob, Perez ... etc.". Nobody can be a son without there being some one who is or was his father. So all these descriptions of "Isaac", "Jacob", "Juda" ... etc. as "... was the son of ..." do overlap in the way demanded by Mink. Nevertheless, there will not be many people who consider this genealogy to be an acceptable narratio: there is no unity of subject-matter, it has no story-line and so on. So, for an acceptable narratio — and *a fortiori* for the ideal narratio — more is required than that its component parts can be linked together by means of "overlapping descriptions". Besides, as our example makes clear, Mink's theory on the overlapping descriptions has a marked predilection for relational predicates; predicates, that is, which need at least two particulars to yield true statements. But there is little reason to believe that everything a historian might have to say, will in *all* cases be translatable into terms of relational predicates. As a matter of fact, in Chapter VI it will be shown that narrative logic has a strongly Leibnizian character. Consequently, in accordance with the relevant tendencies in Leibniz's logic, the narratio is a form of knowledge that tries to get rid of relational predicates as much as possible: the historical narratio should explain historical things without recourse to anything outside themselves, as the well-known historist dictum goes. From this point of view relational predicates that link different "historical things" together are a serious hindrance to an optimal narrative representation of the historical past.

On the other hand Mink demands too much. This need not astonish us: the *raison d'être* of a narratio is to tell us things that could not be known or expected on the basis of what has already been said. New elements, from the outside as it were, have to be brought into the narratio continually, if the reading of it is to make sense. One may conclude therefore that the narratio *sui generis* has to mention things that go beyond the maximum that can be said within Mink's "framework of overlapping descriptions". Mink could object, however, that when new particulars, situations and so on are introduced, unknown or unexpected things may very often be said, *even* when their introduction only occurs under the aegis of "overlapping descriptions".

For instance, to take Mink's own example, the fact that it was Henry who made the offer may be said to constitute a "new" fact. Yet this example already shows that such a reply will not be convincing. For like the proper name "Henry" all terms indicating particular individuals etc. introduced within the framework of overlapping descriptions will have a referring and not a descriptive function (only the overlapping descriptions in question have a descriptive function). And from the present perspective, that which refers is, so to speak, a terminus, i.e. a break in the chain of "story-statements" interconnected by overlapping descriptions. Only if one could conceive of a description that can be repeated (or paraphrased) in each sentence of the narratio, could Mink's proposal be put into practice. But I have no idea what such descriptive terms would look like — and even if they did exist they would certainly lead to very odd narratios.

Nevertheless, we should not pass too severe a judgment upon Mink's proposal. If we take it to mean that a certain connection should always exist between the individual sentences of a narratio, we can only agree with him. Reading him this way, we can say that for Mink the ideal narratio is the clearest, most readable narrative account of (parts of) the past. And certainly, if there is to be such a thing as an ideal narratio, clarity and readability will be among its foremost qualities. However, as we all know, clarity is not enough for a narratio to be acceptable. We must bear in mind that narratios are always accounts of what happened in the past. In our search for the ideal narratio we have not yet considered the obvious question of what in the ideal narratio, the relation should be between (historical) reality and its narrative representation. Therefore, the next three proposals for defining the ideal narratio will try to determine the ideal relation between (parts of) the past and its narrative account.

(6) *The completeness proposal.* What is more natural than the proposal that the ideal narratio should give a *complete* description of (part of) the past, or that *any* question that the narratio might give rise to should be answered by the statements of the narratio themselves or by what could be derived from them (see section 2)). In such a case the relation between (historical) reality and its narrative representations surely is optimal. Of course, no historian and no philosopher of history has ever seriously defended the view that historians ought to construct narratios that give a complete description of the past. But weaker versions of this proposal are not unpopular. It is sometimes argued that the more complete a narrative account of the past, the more it approaches a complete description of the past, the more true or acceptable it will be. Descartes once wrote that historians proceed in a most arbitrary way, because they always omit certain things that nevertheless happened[33]. Apparently this argument has deeply worried

33. "Outre que les fables font imaginer plusieurs événements comme possibles qui ne le sont point; et que même les histoires les plus fidèles, si elles ne changent

many historians ever since. More than a few historians complain that they have to "select" and that by doing so, they have to violate historical reality. It has often been pointed out that this view ultimately depends on the fallacy of the "internality of all relations", that is, the idea that we only have knowledge of a thing if we can produce a complete account of all the relations this particular thing has with all other things. Perhaps no philosopher of history has ventured so far in this direction as Michael Oakeshott: "history accounts *for* change" he writes, "by means of a full account *of* change. The relation *between* events is always other events, and it is established in history by a full relation *of* the events. The conception of cause is thus replaced by the exhibition of a world of events intrinsically related to one another in which no *lacuna* is tolerated. (...) In history "pour savoir les choses, il faut savoir le detail". And the method of the historian is never to explain by means of generalization but always by means of greater and more complete detail"[34] .

According to this view, the best narratio, therefore, is the most detailed historiography; the historiography, that is, which comes closest to a complete description of (parts of) the past. And the, albeit not attainable, ideal narratio is the narratio that gives a complete replica of the past. I should like to underline the fact that those who defend the undiluted version of this proposal and those who adhere to weaker variants do not differ with regard to what should be seen as the ideal narratio, they only disagree on the degree of attainability of the ideal. Of course this already puts the adherents of the weaker variants into an uncomfortable position: what is the use of an ideal that can never be attained? Whether their position is only uncomfortable or even flatly self-contradictory depends on the kind of arguments given for the unattainability of the ideal. Both the weaker and the stronger version can, however, be shown to be unsatisfactory because there is a serious inconsistency in the notion of a complete description of (part of) the past. Some writers argue that a narratio can be compared with a map: just as we do not want a map to register every blade of grass we have no need of narratios that mention even the most obviously insignificant detail of the past. A map should not be a copy of reality; if it were we could just as well look at reality itself. Being an abstraction of reality is just what makes maps so useful. The same goes for historiographies: we expect the historian to tell us only what was important in the past and not the "total past"[35].

However, for the sake of argument, I introduce here a hypothetical person naive enough to maintain that although we should devote more attention to important things in our narratios, we should nevertheless

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ni n'augmentent la valeur des choses, pour les rendre plus dignes d'être lues, au moins en omettent-elles presque toujours les plus basses et moins illustres circonstances: d'où vient que le reste ne parait pas tel qu'il est"; see R. Descartes, *Discours de la méthode,* Paris 1966; p. 37.

34. Oakeshott; p. 143.
35. Nagel; p. 577.

mention all the known or knowable details of the past - be it only in footnotes. At least the ideal narratio must do so. We may answer him in the following manner. If a complete description of the past is possible, there must be a certain object-language with a certain vocabulary that does the trick. Let us suppose the required object-language is L_O. Then we can say that every property of (part of) the past is expressible in L_O. If L_O succeeds in providing us with a complete description of the past while L'_O does not, the reason for this can only lie in the nature of the object-matter of the two languages (i.e. the historical past itself). And we may conclude: "being completely describable in L_O (and not in *any* other object-language like L'_O) is one of the properties of (part of) the past" (2); for if the past were completely describable in either L'_O or L''_O and so on, it would certainly have to be different from what it is now in some relevant aspects. How else could we explain the very special position of L_O? To each language corresponds a particular kind of universe that is completely describable within that language (if, for that matter, complete descriptions can be given; and let us suppose this to be so at this stage of our argument). Because (2) mentions a property of (part of) the past it must — on account of (1) — be a sentence of L_O. But statements on what is and what is not describable within L_O cannot be made in the object-language L_O itself, but only in some meta-language L_m, which has at least L_O as its object. Thus there is some property of (part of) the past that cannot be expressed within L_O but only in, for instance, L_m. This is in contradiction to (1). Therefore, the notion "complete description" has to be rejected as self-contradictory. And the same goes of course for all other weaker and stronger attempts to define the ideal narratio in terms of (maximally) complete descriptions.

(7) *The archivist's proposal.* If then, complete descriptions are impossible we could adopt a more modest position and define the ideal narratio as the narratio correctly reporting every scrap of information the archives contain on a certain aspect or part of the past. It is obvious that, in contrast with the preceding proposal, this one is content with too little. Suppose we have at our disposal only one or two facts (mentioned by Herodotus) on a certain Empire in Antiquity; can we reasonably say that mentioning just these one or two facts is the ideal narratio on that Empire? The mistake in this proposal is that it confuses the past with knowledge of the past; when we ask for the ideal narratio on a historical phenomenon, we wish to know how to represent the past *itself* and not how to display our *knowledge* of the past (should we or should we not mention everything we know of the past?).

(8) *The essentialist's proposal.* Lastly, I shall consider a proposal for the definition of the ideal narratio that has an impressive plausibility and seems to be in conformity with all reasonable and common-sensical intuitions about the narratio. In fact, it is a more practical and realistic variant of the "complete description" suggestion discussed in section (6). Its adherents state that, a complete description being impossible, historians should indicate what is important or essential for a correct

understanding of the past. Thus, the ideal narratio is defined as the narratio that narrates the essence of (parts of) the past. This seems an unexceptionable proposal and only few historians will find fault with it. It correctly circumscribes what every historian attempts to discover in his investigations; moreover, it takes a pleasant, non-committal position between specificity and vagueness. It is therefore remarkable that - as far as I know - it has never been thoroughly defended. Perhaps its merits are believed to be so very obvious that nobody has ever thought it necessary to undertake such a defence. Indeed, in much theorizing on history this proposal is implicitly accepted. Many philosophers of history have studied in great detail what is or what should be seen as important or essential in the past; more particularly, they have asked what criteria can be given for establishing what is or was important in the past. They have distinguished, e.g. between the importance of events/conditions for other events/conditions or examined the "intrinsic" importance of events/ conditions, formulating in this manner a double set of criteria for the importance of events or conditions[36]. This only makes sense on the basis of the premiss that the historian should primarily show in his narratio what was important or essential. But this premiss has never been explicitly argued for.

Like all the other proposals for the definition of the ideal narratio, this one also can be expected to contain a kernel of truth. Surely, the historian must be interested in what is important or essential in the part of the past he studies; he must not bore his reader with the enumeration of irrelevant facts. However it does not follow that we can derive from this perfectly true observation on the purpose of history an acceptable definition of the ideal narratio. What is part and parcel of a particular purpose does not necessarily aptly characterize its nature. For instance, the fact that musicians always hope to procure aesthetic pleasure for their audience, does not shed much light on what exactly they try to do. Moreover, take the sciences: does the physicist attempts to answer the Aristotelian question of what is important of essential in nature? And if he does not do so, why should the situation be different in the historian's case?

Let us investigate the proposal more closely. If it leads to difficulties this may be due to the vagueness of the concepts "important" or "essential". Therefore, our investigation into its merits would primarily require an enumeration of all possible interpretations of these concepts. As each interpretation implies a different definition of the ideal narratio such a procedure would easily fill another chapter. I believe, however, that there is no need to follow this approach: in whatever way the concepts "important" or "essential" are interpreted, each definition occasioned by these interpretations is open to a fatal objection.

First we will have to clarify the phrase "essence of the past" or "essence of part of the past". *Where* is this "essence" if there is such

36. See e.g. W.H. Dray, *Philosophy of history,* Englewood Cliffs 1964; pp. 32 ff.

a thing? Surely not in the past itself. The past itself has no "essence": there are no episodes or aspects of the past which for the historian's convenience bear the label "this is the essence". The phrase "the essence of (part of) the past" is not an identifying description of one or more parts of aspects of the past itself - if it were, the writing of history would be a very simple affair. We should compare the phrase "the essence of (part of) the past" with phrases like "the length or the weight of object O" and contrast it with phrases like "the top or the back of object O" (only the latter phrases refer to *parts* of O). It refers to a conceptual thing and not to something in the past itself. Whoever says *"this* is the essence of (part of) the past" points to an *interpretation* of the past and not to part of the actual past (although, of course, in these interpretations reference is made to the past itself). The "essence" — if anything — is always a construction of the historian. Our definition must therefore take this form: after having diligently studied his sources and secondary literature the historian has "something" in his mind (to be called the "essence" of the part of the past he studies) and subsequently he represents this "something" in his narratio. This sounds plausible, but, in fact, it is not. It implies that we are not dealing with only *one* thing (the narratio) but with *two* things (the narratio *and* the "essence" of which the narratio is the narrative representation). And this is odd. Take a painter: the painter either paints what he sees (a landscape or Louis XIV), or he paints a picture. Both statements are reasonable enough. But we cannot say that, apart from the landscape and the picture, there is a third thing "the essence of the landscape or of the face of Louis XIV" that is painted by him. One does not paint "essences". If anything, we can just assert that his picture - as it is — *shows* us what the painter thought to be the essence of the reality he has painted. But again, the painter paints a landscape or a physiognomy and not the essence of a landscape or a physiognomy. Similarly, we can say of the historian that he either represents reality in his narratio, or that he constructs a narratio, but not that he gives a representation of the "essence" of the past. Nevertheless we may assume that the historian's narratio *shows* us what he thinks the "essence" of the part of the past narrated by him to be. What I mean to say is that there are not two things 1) the "essence" of the past, and 2) the narrative representation of this "essence". There is only one thing, or rather, one kind of thing, that is: narratios. We may for some reason strongly prefer one particular narratio to many others available on a certain topic and therefore value it as one containing the "essence of part of the past", but - and that is my main point - when we speak of "essences" of the past it is always *narratios* that we speak of and nothing else. If the notion "the essence of part of the past" has any meaning at all, this is only when it denotes a narratio. Even when a historian before starting to write his book has something in his mind of which he says to his colleagues: "I already have the essence of my subject-matter in my head", even then he refers to some embryonic *narratio.*

Let us go back to our definition. The ideal narratio has been said to be the narratio that reports the essence of the past. As the phrase "the essence of part of the past" always refers to a particular narratio, we have two possibilities: either the narratio referred to by the phrase "the essence of part of the past" is identical with the ideal narratio, or it is not. In the latter case we define the ideal narratio as the narratio that reports a narratio that is different from the ideal narratio. This is nonsense, of course. If, on the other hand, the ideal narratio and the narratio referred to by the phrase "the essence of the past" are identical, we define the ideal narratio as the narratio that is a report of the ideal narratio. This definition is either circular (when we say that the narratio that reports the ideal narratio is identical with the ideal narratio) or self-contradictory (when we prefer to decide otherwise). So this promising proposal for defining the ideal narratio also leaves us in the cold.

(9) *Conclusion.* We have studied eight proposals for defining the ideal narratio. Most of them were developed from suggestions made in existing literature on the philosophy of history. Possibly even more proposals can be constructed, but at the present stage my inventiveness — and, no doubt, the patience of the reader — is exhausted. We have found that all these proposals show their own fatal deficiencies.

I don't think that any further attempt to define the ideal narratio will be more successful. The general mistake behind the "ideal narratio"-approach is, in my opinion, that it necessarily starts from some apriori intuition about the narratio and then declares this to be the fundamental or "ideal" structure of the narratio. But such apriori intuitions are always abstractions from the properties of actual, existing narratios, and each of them rules out a great number of these properties as merely uninteresting, accidental epiphenomena. Yet, however intelligent and plausible the arguments may be for some intuitive abstraction, we can never prove its acceptability by resorting only to the nature of actual narratios. Such arguments, therefore, only show which narratios are preferred by individual theorists of the narratio. And these are not facts about the narratio but about the literary or historiographical taste of these narrativist philosophers. In fact, the conspicuous dangers of arbitrariness and dogmatism should put us on our guard against the "ideal narratio"-approach, the more so as they remind us of the unavailing discussions on "the essence" of the human being of " the ideal human being".

It should be noted that the philosophy of science has passed through a similar stage and from the reactions of philosophers of science to it, we might conclude that we ought to study the practice of history and investigate how actual narratios are written by individual historians. In the remainder of this book, however, we shall steer a prudent middle course between these two extremes. We shall neither rely upon an apriori intuition about the logical structure of the narratio (the "ideal narratio"-approach), nor restrict our investigation to an analysis of the history of historical writing; instead we will start with non-narrative elements (i.e. individual statements) and attempt to construct narratios

out of these. In other words, I will try to answer the Kantian question how narrative knowledge of historical reality is possible, assuming only that historical reality can be described by constative, singular statements that are either true or false. This book can be seen as an attempt to develop a Critique of Historical Reason - a project put by Dilthey on the agenda of the philosophy of history. Actually my approach is not wholly Kantian but more akin to Strawson's so-called "descriptive metaphysics"[37]: my primary concern is not how knowledge of the past is possible, but rather how the linguistic instruments we use to express such knowledge determine its nature.

I emphasize the pronounced formalist character of this method. What will be said in the subsequent chapters is based on only one assumption, i.e. that knowledge of the past and of social reality is expressed in (series of) singular statements. As a consequence, the account of the narratio given here is supposed to be acceptable to the participants in any conceivable kind of social reality, if only statements are used for its description. What will be maintained also obtains for the inhabitants of some planet in the Andromeda-galaxy, even if they differ from us in their psychological constitution and social structure in every possible way we can think of. I am convinced that present philosophy of history and of the social sciences make far too many material assumptions. For instance, it is argued that social behaviour is essentially "rule-guided behaviour" (Wittgenstein or Winch), or that human beings act rationally and can, in principle, understand each other (hermeneutic theory), or that human actions are always inspired by certain goals (teleological explanations), or that human behaviour follows the guide-line speculative philosophers discover in the past, or that human thinking and actions can be reduced to deep-structures (structuralism) or that they are always determined by social "figurations" (Elias). And this list can be expanded at will. However,

37. See Strawson (1); p. 10. Here Strawson offers the following characteristic of "descriptive metaphysics": "For there is a massive central core of human thinking which has no history - or none recorded in histories of thought; there are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental character, change not at all. Obviously these are not the specialities of the most refined thinking. They are the commonplace of the least refined thinking and are yet the indispensable core of the conceptual equipment of the most sophisticated human beings. It is with these, their interconnexions, and the structure that they form, that a descriptive metaphysics will be primarily concerned".

the influence of such intuitions must be avoided at all costs; in fact, they should once and for all be *radically* removed from the philosophy of history. If anything, such assumptions belong to the domain of history or of the social sciences themselves. Philosophy can only survive and be useful when it minds its own business and stops meddling in the affairs of historians and social scientists.

CHAPTER III
THE SENTENCE AND THE NARRATIO

(1) *Introduction.* Western philosophy has never shown much interest in the philosophical problems that surround the narratio. Exceptions are the Sophists of Classical Antiquity and some Renaissance authors such as Lorenzo Valla. In both cases an attempt was made "to deal with the impure", "to shun the ideal sphere where pure reason and perfect justice resides" and to explore "the shifting and uncertain field of action and discourse"[1]. Such intentions certainly favoured the development of a narrativist philosophy, which investigates the philosophical problems of narrative discourse. However, the voice of the Sophists was smothered by Plato in his quest for the "Eternally True"[2] and the Renaissancist's interest in rhetorics and the narratio was effectively discredited by Cartesian philosophy and the success of the sciences.

Neither has contemporary philosophy shown much interest in the kind of problems investigated in this book. This is all the more remarkable because narrativist philosophy, of course, deals with a linguistic problem and philosophy in this century is strongly interested in linguistic problems. However, contemporary philosophy of language considers solely the problems caused by words, sentences or statements, neglecting almost entirely the study of sets of singular statements, i.e. stories or narratios. Yet at times a narrativist *route* has so strongly suggested itself that it is hard to see why it should not have been followed. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* provides a good example. He argues that no adequate analysis of a sentence is possible without considering the context in which it occurs. Wittgenstein's assertion that in a large class of cases the word "meaning" can be defined as "the meaning of a word is its use in the language"[3] expresses his belief that words and sentences get their proper meaning (partly) due to the conditions of their utterance. It seems a very obvious thing to say that the sentences surrounding a particular sentence are, at the least, part of this context. This would be taking the narrativist course; Wittgenstein, however, preferred to define this context in terms of extra-linguistic conditions.

The reason why no attention has been paid to the narratio appears to me to be twofold. Firstly, there has been a belief, I think, that the most essential and interesting problems in the philosophy of language occur only at the level of words and sentences (or statements), at what might be called the "atomary" level. Secondly, although this was not explicitly stated, narratios were considered to be the "molecular" combinations of the more basic "atomic", sentential elements and consequently narratios

1. Struever; p. 10
2. Struever; p. 6.
3. Wittgenstein (2); section 43.

were not considered to pose their own specific problems. I will not deal with the first assumption. It is a matter of taste and it may even be correct. Around the sentence and the statement there are whole areas of philosophical investigation that are of little or no interest from the point of view of the narratio: epistemo-logical problems, the question of analyticity or of the correct analysis of ethical demands, and so on. So there is a good case for the first assumption.

(2) *The sentence and the narratio.* Yet I disagree with the second assumption. Narratios are more than just conjunctions of sentences, and if a narratio is seen as a mere sequence of sentences something very essential is neglected.

Take a certain narratio N on (part of) the past, and number all its sentences: 1, 2, 3, ... etc. Form the text T_1 by arbitrarily changing the original order of the sentences; to preserve the truth of the individual sentences some relative and personal pronouns may have to be changed as well as some words indicating chronology like "then", "after", "before" and so on. Let us suppose that this correction has taken place in T_1. If, then, a narratio is nothing but a conjunction of sentences, there would be no reason to prefer N to T_1. Of course this is not the case. However, the "reductionist", i.e. the defender of the view that narratios are nothing but conjunctions of sentences, might argue that it will always be possible to reconstruct N from T_1, so we cannot attribute different cognitive statuses to N and T_1; in both cases we are concerned with a conjunction of sentences, although it may be somewhat easier to establish the cognitive content of N than that of T_1. But that the sentences in N are arranged in a special way is merely a matter of convenience. That such a reconstruction of N out of T_1 should always be possible seems unlikely, but let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that it is. Even then, two objections can be made to the reductionist thesis. Firstly, it is certainly true that the individual sentences contain, amongst other information, sufficient evidence for what the reconstruction of T_1 has to be. But sufficient evidence for some conclusion — in this case for the reconstruction of N out of T_1 - is not identical with this conclusion - the reconstruction of N out of T_1 - itself. That branch of the philosophy of science that studies the cognitive status of theories is concerned with the explanation and interpretation of this difference. Thus, there is a certain gap between N and T_1

This leads me to my second objection to the reductionist position. I assumed that N was "the" reconstruction of T_1. Yet more reconstructions (e.g. N_1; N_2, ... etc.) may be possible, so that the sentences of T_1 may permit of a number of "narrational" interpretations. However, if the reductionist is right, the same would hold for N itself. The conclusion should then be that we can never justifiably say that we have understood a narratio unless we have tried to make sense of all the possible permutations of the sentences of N (after the corrections mentioned above have been made for each permutation). This is obviously untrue. But let us now suppose that T_1 can be reconstructed in one way only, viz. by

reproducing N. Then N has a special status, which makes it different from T_1 or all other possible permutations of the given sentences. This means that by arbitrarily mixing the sentences of N we have eliminated something that N had and T_1, T_2, T_3 ... etc. do not have. And this can only be true if N is more than a mere conjunction of sentences.

The reductionist may now be willing to abandon his initial extreme position without giving up the essence of his reductionist programme. He may even maintain that narratios are nothing but conjunctions of sentence, while adding, however, that the sentences of the narratios must also be arranged in a certain order. He may argue that this extra proviso does not represent an essential deviation from his original reductionist position; similarly there does exist some - sequential - order between the natural numbers, but whether we enumerate a specific set of natural numbers in conformity with this order or not, does not interfere with the informative content of our enumeration which is in both cases exactly the same. It is only for convenience sake that we prefer to enumerate numbers according to this order. But this is wrong: as soon as the reductionist claims the existence of one or more principles for "ordering" the sentences of the narratio, he claims the existence of something that can never exclusively be reduced to the bare sentences of a narratio themselves. Likewise the principle that "orders" the natural numbers cannot be found in these numbers themselves but only in something external to them - as, for instance, the relation "... is greater than...". Therefore, speaking of an "order among the sentences of a narratio" contradicts the reductionist's programme.

Moreover, when the reductionist refers to a specific "order" in the sentences of N, he apparently believes that, the cognitive content of the individual sentences of N (or of T_1 etc., for that makes no difference here) being what they *are,* there exists an intrinsic order connecting these sentences. This "order" openly reveals itself in N and we can have recourse to it if we want to translate T_1, T_2 ... etc. into a decent narratio (i.e. N). But how can we find out about this intrinsic order? As far as I can see only by saying something like this: if you have a set of sentences roughly with meaning A, it must be followed by a set of sentences roughly with meaning B, and be preceded by another such set with meaning C, and so on. Only if we know this can the correct order of the sentences given to us be confirmed (in the case of N) or established (in the case of T_1, T_2 ... etc.). But, and this is my main argument against this reductionist strategy, such sets of sentences themselves would already be little narratios, albeit of a less specific kind than the original one(s).

A similar objection can be raised against some recent proposals for text-analysis. Here four things are distinguished: a) the surface-structure of the text (the narratio as it is), b) the deep-structure (the "semantic core" of the narratio) and c) rules for text-transformation (that is, rules for how to proceed from b) to a)) and d) text-grammar (that is, rules for how to proceed from a) to b)). It is obvious that the deep-

structures are in fact identical with the less specific narratios I mentioned at the end of the preceding paragraph. The rules under c) are purely formal and the deep structures of narratios themselves apparently still have a narrative content. This is amply confirmed by the examples given by the adherents of this kind of text-analysis: their deep structures are always little stories with the details left out; the rules of c) may see to it that the details are put in the proper place. Understandably, therefore, these deep-structures are often called "stories" or "fables". Therefore, when the reductionist is tempted to identify his "principles for ordering the sentences in a narratio" with the rules of c), he is once more fighting a losing battle: narratios have already infiltrated his ranks.

This method of text-analysis has further disadvantages. Firstly, these deep-structures are foggy things. Secondly, this method sets great store by the search for regularities in actual narratios. But I fear that the results of this search will not be very illumating. It is as if somebody who wants to learn the rules of chess is satisfied by making a list of sequences of moves recurring in the games investigated by him. He will be unable to distinguish between the real rules of the game and mere regularities in the strategies of chess-players. Even when he discovers a number of regularities that *we* know to be identical with the rules of the game, *he* can never be sure of that.

There is however, a still more fundamental deficiency in this method of text-analysis. When we have read and understood a narratio, we know its *content.* Students of text-analysis have a tendency to identify the content of a narratio with its deep structure and it is only natural that they should do so. They point out that we can retell, paraphrase or epitomize a narratio. If we do one of these things, the content of the original narratio remains (largely) intact; at least we should preserve it as much as possible. The interpretation of such "transformations" of the original text is readily available: the same deep-structure (= content) is used to generate different surface-structures. But it is easy to show that the general and abstract narratios that form the deep-structure should not be identified with the content of the narratio. For if we want to give an account of a narratio (e.g. by making an abstract of it) we do our utmost to retain the specificity of the original narratio. Of course we shall omit many details, but we will keep all the details we consider indispensable for attaching content and original narratio alike to the particular historical situation referred to in the narratio. Making an abstract of a narratio is not tantamount to making it less specific. On the contrary [4] .

What I should like to point out, therefore, is that the "content of a narratio" cannot be related to particular sentences in it, and *a fortiori* not to the generalized content of particular sentences. It is *not one sentence*

4. It will be shown in a later phase of our argument that in contrast to the literal sentences under discussion here, metaphorical sentences can sometimes be succesful in summarizing a narratio.

in particular, but *all* the sentences of a narratio together that determine this content, although *some* sentences are more determinative for the content of the narratio than others. Apparently, the concept "content of the narratio" cannot be reduced to the concept "the content (or, rather, meaning) of (a) particular sentence(s)." Hence, it follows that narratios cannot be reduced to sentences and that to understand the nature of the narratio we cannot restrict our investigation to the level of sentences.

(3) *Can narratios be (un)true? (I).* As a consequence of the foregoing discussion it is now necessary to examine the relation between the truth of statements and the truth of narratios. If the content of the narratio cannot be reduced to the meaning of particular statements in the narratio, it is to be expected that the relation between "the truth of the narratio" and "the truth of its individual statements" is less clear than we might at first presume. Before proceeding, I would like to remind the reader that in this study it is assumed that the narratio consists of statements that are either true or false (see Chapter I, section (4)).

The reductionist is not likely to object to using the phrase "truth or falsity of narratios". We may expect him to hold that the concept "the truth of a narratio" is perfectly clear to him and that it is a function of the truth of the individual statements of a narratio. However, we encounter the following difficulty. A conjunction of statements is false if one of its individual statements is false, which implies that a whole narratio, possibly consisting of many thousands of statements, has to be rejected because of the falsity of only one of its statements. And this is excessive. We could, then, admit that there are *degrees* of truth and say that the truth-value of a narratio is a number between zero and one to be determined by the percentage of true statements divided by one hundred. This reductionist solution, however, will soon meet with further difficulties. Suppose we have two narratios N_1 and N_2 on one and the same topic, e.g. 17th century natural law. N_1 mentions the cardinal fact of the Stoic character of 17th century natural law but falsely states that according to Grotius the state of nature antedates civil society, whereas N_2 correctly represents Grotius' views but fails to demonstrate the Stoicism of 17th century natural law. The reductionist is now obliged to prefer N_2 to N_1. This of course he refuses to do and so he amends his theory by proposing that the individual statements should be judged by the importance of what they report. If a statement reports something important and is, moreover, true, it gets a higher mark than a statement that does not satisfy one or both of these conditions. And, he argues, if we bear this extra condition in mind when assessing the two narratios, N_1 will no doubt be judged the better one. So we now have two criteria for the truth of the narratio: 1) the truth or falsity of its individual statements and 2) the degree to which the evidence reported in the individual statements is essential for a correct understanding of what the narratio is about. However, as we saw in our discussion of the two narratios on 17th century natural law these two criteria may contradict each other. This does not brighten the prospects for the reductionist

view, for what *third* criterion could straighten out such a contradiction?

Because a discussion of this problem is bound to be quite hopeless I propose to concentrate our attention on criterion 2). Moreover, we have supposed that the statements in a narratio are true and assumed that the difficulty in writing narrative history is not in satisfying criterion 1) but criterion 2). Consequently, we could claim that a narratio is true if it reports everything, or to put it less categorically, almost everything that is essential for a correct understanding of the subject-matter of the narratio. Such a view has indeed been put forward by some philosophers of history. Fain, for instance, writes that saying that a narratio is true should be taken to mean that this narratio tells us the "relevant truth"[5]. And Fain continues: "relevancy, however, is not achieved in the law or in history by piling up facts. Relevancy, I shall suggest, is achieved as the resultant of a complex interplay between fact and conceptual framework"[6]. Later on, Fain gives a somewhat more accurate specification of his notion of "relevancy". He writes that the relevant truth is attained when the facts, as reported, fit together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. We have met this convenient simile before, but Fain uses it in a different manner. He reminds us that there are two ways of assembling a jigsaw puzzle: "one can turn all the pieces picture-side down and endeavor to put the puzzle together by referring only to the configuration of the individual pieces [this apparently was what Mink had in mind (FA)]. Another method is to assemble the puzzle by attempting to ascertain how the information conveyed by the coloured side of a piece fits into the total picture"[7]. In this case it is not only the shape of the pieces that matters but also the contribution each piece makes to the total picture. We have a conceptual knowledge of the kind of object the picture of the puzzle shows (cows, goblins, 17th century ships and the like) and we apply such knowledge in assembling the puzzle. The suggestion behind this simile seems to be (I deliberately write "seems to be" for Fain does not indicate with sufficient precision in what respects he considers puzzles and narratios to be analogous) that the conceptual knowledge we have of our world serves as a guide when we try to tell the *relevant* truth. Just as we expect a red cap to belong near the goblin's white beard we expect the historian of Romanticism to say something of neo-Platonism, Pietism, *Sturm und Drang* and so on. And if the historian lives up to these expectations we regard his narratio as conveying the relevant truth (provided, of course, that what he says in terms of statements is true).

A number of objections can be made regarding this view. Firstly, Fain does not show how to tell the relevant truth but how to write a consistent narratio. But it is easy to conceive of a consistent narratio of which all the parts form a closely-knit unity, which nevertheless does not provide knowledge we consider relevant (in any ordinary sense of

5. Fain; p. 247.
6. Fain; p. 247.
7. Fain; p. 249.

the word). Secondly, thanks to our knowledge of goblins we expect a red cap as soon as we perceive a white beard; but usually we do not have similar knowledge of the past. Before we start reading history we do not know what will be relevant for the understanding of a particular part of the past. The historian is supposed to tell us that. Of course we do not expect a historiography of Romanticism to inform us about the prices of grain in the 1680's. But if criteria for relevance are looked for at *that* level all historiographies can be said to tell us the relevant truth, for in this respect historians never fail to come up to expectations. Therefore, if the relevant truth about a historical phenomenon P is to consist largely of truths about P that the reader does not know to be relevant for an understanding of this phenomenon (and if this assumption were wrong, I would not know why people should read history at all) then Pain's simile of the jigsaw puzzle is plainly misleading. So this attempt to establish an acceptable interpretation of the phrases "the truth or falsity of narratios" is unsuccesful.

A somewhat similar attempt to define these concepts was made in an illuminating article by Gorman. Gorman, too, believes that the truth of the individual statements of a narratio is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the truth (Gorman prefers the term "acceptability") of a narratio. In a very ingenious way Gorman contrasts two accounts of the life of William Joyce (the "Lord Haw Haw" of World War II) and then he argues that both consist only of true statements and yet they cannot both be true at the same time: he even describes them as "incompatible" (later on I will return to this strong qualification). Concluding that the truth or falsity of the individual statements in a narratio is an unreliable criterion for deciding upon its acceptability, he goes in search of a more appropriate criterion elsewhere.

Gorman suggests that the acceptability of a narratio be made dependent upon the "relevancy" of its individual statements. Next, he tries to find a criterion for the relevancy of individual narrative statements. He is convinced that there is a "rational standard" for this relevancy, but apart from a not very helpful digression on such "rational standards" in the sciences (e.g. Popper's falsifiability criterion), he says nothing substantial on this point. However, it should be noted that according to Gorman these "rational standards" — whatever their nature — decide upon the relevancy of statements for the narrative account as a whole (i.e. not upon their relevancy for understanding a historical phenomenon).

Consequently, for Gorman (and Pain's conceptions show a similar tendency) the relevance of statements is not dependent upon their relation to historical reality itself but upon their place or function in the narratio taken as a whole. His suggestion that the concept "the truth of the narratio" be assimilated via "the acceptability of the narratio" with "the relevancy of its individual statements" would thus induce us to neglect the question of the correspondence between the narratio and historical reality when we consider the truth or falsity of a narratio. This

would violate even the most liberal interpretations of the word "true". Gorman will be obliged to allow that novels can be "true" even if they are entirely fictitious.

One might try to repair the damage by identifying the relevance of statements with the degree to which the information they convey is essential or important for understanding actual historical phenomena. In this way the relation between the narratio and historical reality could be restored. However, we have seen in Chapter II, section (8), that such a strategy will be unsuccessful.

(4) *Can narratios be (un)true? (II).* We may conclude that the attempt to legalize the concept "the truth of the narratio" by taking it to mean "the relevant truth on the subject the narratio is about" has little chance of success. Let us, therefore, try another approach. There are four theories of truth: the correspondence, the coherence, the pragmatist and the performative theory of truth. Each of these gives an analysis of what we mean when we say that a statement is true. We shall now attempt to apply them to the narratio and see what the result will be. If none of the four theories can be usefully applied to the narratio we are obliged to conclude, I believe, that the concept "the truth of the narratio" should be rejected.

According to the performative theory of truth, the phrase "... is true" is redundant: there is no cognitive difference between (1) "p" (where "p" is a statement) and (2) "p is true". Only, when we say or prefer to say (2) instead of (1), we *perform* a kind of "speech-act", wishing to express our agreement with p, or to remind someone of p and so on. But from a cognitive point of view the phrase "... is true" is redundant: it adds nothing to whatever we fill in in place of the dots. So we could safely eliminate the word "true" from our dictionary. But, of course, if we did so, we should eliminate our problem as well. Thus the performative theory does not bring us nearer to a solution of our initial difficulty.

What about the pragmatic theory of truth which actually develops Goethe's well-known dictum: "was fruchtbar ist, allein ist wahr"? According to this theory statements are true when they prove to be a reliable guide for (scientific) action: we have only "differences in practice" (Peirce[8]) to rely upon when we discuss the truth of statements, theories and so on. If P_1 and P_2 have contrasting opinions O_t and O_2 on subject-matter S (P_1 believes O_1 to be true, and P_2 believes O_2 to be true) their different *handling* of S (and related subject-matters) is the clearest indication of their disagreement. The statement that P believes O to be true simply means that P is inclined to a particular line of action in situations on which O has some bearing (the corollary that truth is always concerned with *people* who believe something and act accordingly, has been

8. The pragmatic theory of truth draws its inspiration from Peirce's declaration: "(…) there is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice". Quoted in G. Ezorsky, The pragmatic theory of truth, in P. Edwards ed., *The encyclopedia of philosophy* Vol VI, London 1967; p. 427.

accepted wholeheartedly by most defenders of the pragmatic theory of truth, in particular C.S. Peirce). In short, action based upon a particular belief is the best indication of what exactly that belief is. Consequently, an accurate appraisal of the action to which a particular belief gives rise is the best criterion for deciding upon the truth of that belief. Successful action is inspired by true belief.

It is not my intention to discuss here the merits of each of the four theories of truth. I just take them as they are and try to find out whether their application to the narratio makes sense. Nevertheless, I must point out that whatever one's opinion of the pragmatic theory is, it cannot reasonably be denied that it is best suited to the experimental, and more particularly, the *applied* sciencies. Surely, when physicists adhere to different theories, the way in which they arrange their experimental tests will differ too. It is not unlikely a) that the character of the tests is the best indication of the nature of their disagreement and b) that the most successful experiments (or applications of the corresponding theories) are inspired by those theories which we are most justified in calling "true".

But it is not so obvious at all that the application of this truth-theory to *history* should be equally plausible. The historian does not submit his subject-matter, the past, to tests: it is not in his power to experiment with the past. He cannot arrange certain aspects of the past in such a manner that he gets specific answers to specific questions. As a result, it is difficult to see what sort of correspondence there could be between a historian's experimental handling of the past and his views on the past. According to the pragmatist's conceptions it would therefore be impossible to distinguish truth and falsity in history.

I must emphasize that my point should not be regarded as a complaint about the historian's incapacity to experiment; Nagel was entirely right when he warned against the tendency to exaggerate the indispensability of experiments and underlined that in sciences like astronomy truth may be attained by other methods as well[9]. Yet - and that is my point here — it is hard to see, how the pragmatic theory of truth could be adapted to suit these essentially non-experimental sciences. It might be suggested that the manner in which a scientist or a scholar investigates the universe or history constitutes the scientific or historiographical practice from which we are able to infer his opinions on what is true or false. But the fact that someone has a certain belief is insufficient evidence for the truth of what is believed.

If the pragmatist accepts this objection he may confront us with the following situation. When a researcher proposes interpretation I_1 of (part of) the past while rejecting interpretation I_2, his adherence to I_1 will surely give rise to a different kind of inquiry into that part of the past than if he had accepted I_2. Even in historiography, therefore, disagreements entail differences in research-practice. After comparing the

9. Nagel; p. 452.

results of different "handlings" of the past inspired by different interpretations of the past it is possible to determine which "handling" of the past has been most successful and then we have our "true" narratio. Actually, I have no quarrel with this suggestion, except that it tacitly abandons the whole idea behind the pragmatic theory of truth. For how can we determine what the most successful "handling" of the past is? Not by assessing the "practical" results of such "handling". Indeed, we can form an opinion about the truth of, for instance, mechanical theories, by checking whether or not bridges constructed with the aid of these theories tend to colapse. But we can only select the most succesful "handling" of the past by comparing its results with other interpretations of the past which we already possess. Not *reality* but other *interpretations* of the past are our arbiter. So coherence with other interpretations of the past is the ultimate test for the truth of a specific narratio, if we subscribe to the pragmatic theory of truth as amended above. This, however, is no longer the pragmatic but the coherence theory of truth. We may conclude, therefore, that the pragmatic theory of truth is either not applicable to the narratio (if we restrict the theory to its proper domain, the experimental or applied sciences) or that it degenerates into a coherence theory of truth if we do apply it to the narratio.

We shall now investigate the correspondence and the coherence theories of truth. As these are the most widely held theories at present, we may surmise that they have most chance of yielding an acceptable interpretation of the concept "the truth of the narratio". I shall start with the correspondence theory. Austin's formulation gives us access to some of the most interesting implications of the theory when applied to the narratio. That is why I begin with Austin's representation; a more general account will be given later on. Austin writes: "a statement is said to be true when the *historic* state of affairs to which it is correlated by the demonstrative conventions (the one to which it "refers") is of a *type* [i.e. is sufficiently like those standard states of affairs (FA)] with which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the descriptive conventions"[10]. The gist of this definition is that *sentences* in contrast to *statements* do not depend for their contribution to truth or falsity upon the conditions of their utterance (compare the sentence "I am in pain" uttered by myself and uttered by others, or uttered by myself on different occasions). The *descriptive* conventions specify this general or standard type of state of affairs. A *statement* on the other hand refers to a specific historic state of affairs and is tied to it by the *demonstrative* conventions (for instance, when *I* say at t "I am in pain", then it is *Ankersmit* who is in pain at t). A statement, then is true when the historic state of affairs to which it is tied by the demonstrative conventions is sufficiently like this "standard" state of affairs that is specified by the descriptive conventions of the sentence.

10. Austin; p. 122.

In ordinary constative statements that can be either true or false, this "standard" state of affairs is most typically determined by the meaning of the words. If we say "red" in the sentence "x is red", the descriptive conventions determine the meaning of this word by specifying a band of a certain width in a colour-spectrum of a certain richness (if x is purple and if the spectrum is so richly differentiated as to contain the colour purple, the statement "x is red" is false, assuming that in *this* case something cannot be both red and purple; if the descriptive conventions for the use of the word "red" are such as not to account for what we might call "purple", the statement is true). Let us assume that all this is acceptable for the kind of statements contained in the narratio as stipulated in Chapter I, section (4).

For narratios, however, things are different. Firstly, a distinction analogous to that between statement and sentence cannot be made with regard to the narratio. If anything, the narratio shows a certain resemblance to statements (but not to sentences) because it cannot refer to different historical circumstances. A narratio cannot be used to characterize a particular class of historical states of affairs - and if a "narratio" does, something is wrong with it. Narratios always account for one specific historical situation only.

Secondly, it might be argued that for narratios there are also certain descriptive conventions that determine the limits, so to speak, within which the actual past should lie if the narratio is to be true. However, we cannot speak of "descriptive conventions" in connection with the narratio. Words like "red", "circular", "heavy" etc. have their "descriptive conventions" because we can, at least in principle, use these words in many different contexts, but it is nonsense to say that narratios are used in different contexts. In a way, a narratio is like a word that is spoken only once. Or, to be more precise, although narratios contain true statements and although true statements can be made on them, they cannot be used for making true statements (like words) and thus we cannot conceive of "descriptive conventions" for their correct use. If, then, we cannot say that there is a certain *type* of historical states of affairs corresponding to a narratio in a way reminiscent of sentences, it follows that we have no standards for the appraisal of the truth of narratios similar to the standards postulated by Austin. For what would such a standard be like? Supposing a historian writes a history of British colonial expansion in the 18th century, what standard of truth do we have in order to make a judgment about the truth or falsity of the historian's account of this historical phenomenon? Of course each individual historical narratio on this particular topic may be considered an attempt at establishing such a standard. And if I am allowed to commit myself for once to using the word "true", every ordinary historian believes his narratio to be true. However, unlike sentences and statements, narratios do not have some kind of narrative "meaning" that serves as a standard for deciding upon their truth or falsity.

Next, I should like to give this discussion a somewhat more general

character. My argument will be fundamentally the same as the one just given, but because of subsequent adaptation it has a wider import. Let us formulate the correspondence theory in a more conventional way than was done by Austin. According to the correspondence theory, then, a statement is true if it corresponds to the specific state of affairs it is about. If we substitute "narratio" for "statement", this becomes: a narratio is true if it corresponds to the specific state of affairs it is about. This, I think, is unacceptable. For, when the correspondence theory is applied to narratios, it causes a peculiar ambiguity that is absent in the case of statements. Take a wholly unambiguous statement, albeit as complicated as can be imagined. It is a most convenient property of statements — as far as they are unambiguous and thus can be either true or false - that they always unmistakably identify what state of affairs they are about. *If*, I emphasize, *if* we deal with statements that are either true or false, we always know exactly what states of affairs, or aspects thereof, do correspond to the statement in question. Next, we can turn to (actual) reality and find out about the truth of the statement. Therefore, statements that we can characterize as either true or false (and admittedly there are many that do not have this property but these, of course, are immaterial to our discussions on the application of the concept "truth" to the narratio) always unmistakably define one or more aspects of reality. And that they should do so, is an important, if not the most important condition for their being true or false.

However, when dealing with the narratio we have to do without such comforting clarity. What is the historic state of affairs that corresponds to a narratio? If H_1 and H_2 both write a narratio on British colonial expansion from 1702 to 1963, they both write, allegedly, about the same complex state of affairs; nevertheless, their narratios may be widely different. Should we then say that, for instance, H_2 apparently does not know what British colonial expansion from 1702 to 1763 was and, therefore, has produced an erroneous narratio? But what makes us so sure that H_t is correct about what this colonial expansion was? We cannot simply establish or "show" that we are right, we can only *argue* our claim. Once more, we have no standards here. Historical discussions are not decided by just checking if the right narratio has been attached to the "right thing" in the past. We cannot compare the "right things" in the past to a number of paintings we know only from their discriptions in a museum-catalogue. To verify which description belongs to which painting we could simply go to the museum. A similar solution, unfortunately, is impossible in the case of historical discussions.

There is a curious lack of fixity in the correspondence between the narratio and the past represented in it. The narratio does not select - in a way known and accepted by all who speak the language in which the narratio is written — a specific and well-defined number of aspects of the past agreed upon by all readers of the narratio, aspects which could subsequently be inspected in order to decide upon the truth of the narratio. The reader may now be inclined to observe that each individual

statement is, as we have assumed, either true or false and that its being either true or false is and ought to be a criterion for the truth of the narratios of which it is a part. I would like to recall, however, that we rejected this naive view at the outset of our discussion on the truth of the narratio. As a consequence of this lack of fixity, we cannot pretend to know precisely, after having read a narratio, what "the case was". Cognitively, narratios have — so to speak - a "soft underbelly", And this is where they differ most conspicuously from statements. That explains why we cannot speak of "good" of "bad" statements in the way we can meaningfully speak of "good" or "bad" narratios. The statement is able to express its meaning exactly and completely, whereas an element of ambiguity seems unavoidable when we deal with complex historical narratios. We can know for certain whether or not the paraphrase of a statement correctly represents the meaning of the original statement, but we can never be quite so certain in the case of a narratio. We consider language to be perfectly suited to its task as long as we are dealing with separate statements, but we seem to put an unbearable pressure on it when we use it narratively. Language, it seems, in its "evolutionary" struggle for the representation of reality has achieved the sentential but not yet the narrative representation of reality. In the narratio the statements "do more", apparently, than just unite their separate meanings. They impart to the narratio a cognitive value that should be distinguished from the sum of the meanings of the individual statements.

What has been said just now should not be interpreted as a complaint that there is a regrettable conceptual anarchy existing in history. We shall see in Chapter VII that the narratio not only describes the past (in the way statements describe reality) but also proposes a "meta-phoric" view on historical reality. The fact that the narratio does these two things at one and the same time is responsible for the lack of fixity between the narratio and historical reality. To demand that this lack of fixity should be removed from the narratio is tantamount to demanding that all narrative use of language should be eliminated. Criticizing the narratio for this lack of fixity is measuring the narratio with the yard-stick of the statement. However, the narratio can be very precise both in its descriptive and in its metaphoric component. The narratio can only be accused of lack of precision if the wrong criteria (i.e. those of the statement) are applied and if it is claimed - albeit correctly - that the fixity in the relation between the statement and the historical state of affairs to which it refers is absent in the narratio.

Although it is as yet impossible at this stage for me to give a full exposition of my view of the matter, I should like to add a short comment on this lack of fixity in historiography, or, to put it differently, on the remarkable absence of standards of truth in the case of the narratio. Historians write histories about events like the French Revolution, British colonial expansion in the 18th century, persecutions of witches in the 16th century and so on. Fortunately historians and their public do not object to such and similar concepts, for without them the

writing of history would become impossible. In daily life we know how to individuate things (to which we have given names) by means of identifying descriptions. We do not hesitate to assume that in history the situation is similar. What else could the French Revolution be than the social and political upheaval at the end of the 18th century in France that shattered an ancient monarchy and led to the rule of a new class? This is why we (subconsciously) believe that we all have the same thing in mind when we use the name "French Revolution". The undeniable fact that all existing historiographies on the subject frequently overlap corroborates this belief. Yet this is an unsatisfactory definition of the situation. The referent of the name "French Revolution" (let us for the moment accept that there is such a referent - later on we shall see that this is not the case) cannot be "picked out" from other "things" in the past as can be done with the referents of more ordinary proper names. The various uses of the proper name "French Revolution" show a certain analogy with Wittgenstein's well-known "family-resemblances": "what still counts as a game and what no longer does? Can you give the boundary? No. You can *draw* one; for no one has so far been drawn (but that never troubled you before when you used the word "game")"[11]. This analogy suggests that *if* we should wish to speak of (un)true narratios we should have to choose between saying either that *every* narratio is true (because it belongs to the "family" of narrative descriptions of a subject-matter S) or that *every* narratio is false (in so far as every narratio pretends to be the exclusive delineation of S[12]. Both alternatives are equally absurd and that again tells very strongly against the proposal to use the phrase "(un)true narratios", How odd it is that when we use this phrase historiographical discussions on the truth or falsity of narratios turn into a philosophical debate!

The curious character of historical terms (and the remainder of this book will be devoted to an exploration of the nature of these terms) gives us another clue for understanding why traditional theories of truth fail to be applicable to the narratio. Apart from the correspondence between the individual statements of a narratio and historical reality (this correspondence is beyond doubt), we cannot speak of a particular, "narrativist" correspondence between the narratio in its totality and the historical reality related in it. If we have to choose between two competing narratios N_1 and N_2 on S we cannot solve our problem by simply looking at S and establishing what the "correspondence" between S and N_1 and N_2 respectively is - for the notion "S" itself has an ambiguity that is an exact correlate of the differences between N_1 and N_2. The fact that something similar can be said of scientific theories only lends extra support to this view. Therefore, when we are considering the content of

11. Wittgenstein (2); section 68.
12. It should be noted that our concern is not: "if a is given to us (e.g. the French Revolution) what can or should be said on it?" but rather "where lies the line of demarcation between a (e.g. the French Revolution) and not-a (e.g. the Ancien Régime)?"

narratios, we cannot demand a correspondence between states of affairs in reality and their *narrative* representation. So much for the correspondence theory, which we may now dismiss with equanimity.

That leaves us with one last candidate: the coherence theory of truth. According to this theory a statement is true if it coheres with a system of other statements that we are prepared to accept. It is easy to see what this means for the narratio. The main problem, I believe, will be to clarify what is meant by a "coherence of narratios". When do narratios (fail to) cohere? That statements (fail to) cohere is acceptable to anybody. But can we say the same of narratios? In this connection I would like to recall to mind the article by Gorman, referred to on p.65 of this book. The two narratios on the life of William Joyce, both consisting of true statements only, did not cohere according to Gorman. He even called them "incompatible", without explaining, however, what he understands by this term. Webster gives the following definition of "incompatible": "incapable of appearing or of being thought together or of entering into the same system, theory or practice (incompatible ideas): incapable of harmonious association"[13]. I note in passing that the "incapability ... of entering into the same system" in Webster's definition labels the notion of (in)compatibility" as a good candidate for a criterion of truth, when truth is understood in accordance with the coherence theory. If thinking a excludes thinking b, thinking them together involves a contradiction. And saying that the conjunction of two statements leads to a contradiction is equivalent to saying that the *truth* of a excludes the *truth* of b (and vice versa). Thus we define the relation of incompatibility between a and b as follows: a and b are incompatible when a's being true implies b's being false and vice versa. Or, whoever uses the word "incompatible" always bears in mind the words "true" and "untrue". If we apply all this to narratios, that it is permissible to speak of the "in-compatibility" of narratios is also sufficient support for the view that narratios can be characterized as either true of false. So the most plausible procedure now is to investigate whether Gorman was justified in characterizing the two narratios in William Joyce as "incompatible".

I will state forthwith my own position. I admit that we can speak of the "incompatibility of narratios", but reject that this should lead to the conclusion that narratios can be either true or false. No doubt I have caused some confusions by so abruptly contradicting what has just been said. I hope to show, however, that I have not involved myself in a contradiction. What made Gorman speak of the "incompatibility" of the two accounts of Joyce's biography? Although he does not say this explicitly, the context in which he uses the word "incompatible" suggests that he has in mind the relation between the respective narratios and the effect — in a moral sense — they produce on the reader. Thus the first of the two biographies seems to imply that Joyce was unjustly condemned. The second narratio, on the other hand, convinces us that Joyce should

13. *Webster's third international dictionary* Vol II, Chicago 1971; p. 1144.

have been hanged. Joyce's judge had to choose between condemning and not condemning Joyce to be hanged. Indeed, there is an "incompatibility" between the two alternatives. I believe, then, that the term "incompatible", which was correctly used in the description of the relation between the two possible courses of juridical action with regard to Joyce, was taken by Gorman from its proper context and used to characterize the narratio that served as the factual justification for each course of action. But we are not permitted to make such a move. The incompatibility between the two verdicts is due to certain distinction made in the legal system. These distinctions have a different origin and function than those the historian discerns in reality. For the judge is not a historian, he is not interested in Ranke's "wie es eigentlich gewesen" in its own right, but in the question of how a legal rule and what legal rule applies to a certain case. One could say that the penal code provides the judge with a large number of "standard narratios" and when pronouncing his judgment, the judge has to decide whether what actually happened was more like one or more like another "standard narratio". I emphasize that these "standard narratios" are of course not narratios in the proper sense of the word: because of their hypothetical character they do not relate actual historical phenomena; they do not even offer generalizations of them. I nevertheless venture to call them "narratios" (albeit "standard narratios") because they constitute the best narrative analogue I can think of to Austin's "sentences" when the latter are contrasted with "statements": the way "standard narratios" correlate with a general type of situations specifically described by narratios in the proper sense of the word has a close resemblance to the way sentences correlate with statements.

However, and here the analogy comes to an end, the "standard narratios" supplied by our ethical or legal systems do not provide us with criteria for the truth or falsity of the actual narratios. On the contrary, the idea of a "scientific historiography" — as German scholars like to call it — arose at the beginning of the 19th century only after ethical interpretations of history had been conclusively rejected. In the light of our discussion we might interpret this historiographical revolution as resulting from a growing awareness amongst historians of the specificity inherent in the narratio, or to put it metaphorically, as a growing preference for the statement over the sentence (in Austin's terminology). And this growing awareness, in its turn, could only come in the wake of a new insight into the differences between the procedures followed by judges and those followed by historians. The judge reasons from his (standard) narratios towards the past, the historian from the past towards a narratio; the judge's narratios are ready-made, the historian's are made to measure. Ethical or legal systems do not provide the "standards" or "paradigms" which the historian applies in order to reach the truth.

To resume the argument: the notion "coherence" obliged us to discuss the problem of the "incompatibility" of narratios. However, we

found that the use of the latter term in historiography is only justified when ethical or legal interpretations are our goal. Because nearly all historians agree that such interpretations should be avoided, we must conclude that the attempt to justify the concepts "the truth or falsity of the narratio" via the concept "incompatibility" has been unsuccessful.

Let us start once more at the very beginning. Our difficulties arose from the attempt to interpret the word "cohere": when do narratios (fail to) cohere? White clarifies the term as follows: "coherence within a larger system requires that the members of the system are related to each other by ties of logical implication as the elements in a system of pure mathematics are related"[14]. Obviously, the requirement is far too rigorous to be applicable to history. It is absurd to say that Peter Gay's history of the Enlightenment is true (or false) because it is logically implied (or not) by the narratios of, for instance, Cassirer or Venturi on the subject (if one believes that narratios on the same subject should supply the logical implication), or by Hazard's book on the crisis of the European mind from 1680 to 1715 and Jones's *Revolution and Romanticism* (if one believes that the logical implication ought to be established on the basis of narratios dealing with different though closely related topics). Even if we relax the requirement and read "by ties of logical implication" as "by ties acceptable to all reasonable persons" while eliminating entirely the reference made to pure mathematics, there remain difficulties. This is a consequence of a weakness inherent in the coherence theory of truth. It is sometimes argued that whereas the correspondence theory states the *meaning* of the word "true" the coherence theory only shows how to proceed in order to *establish* truth or falsehood. That this is a very sensible suggestion is evident when we realize that the coherence theory only makes sense if we already have at our disposal some statements that we believe to be true. Only then can we speak of a coherence of other statements within this body of true statements. But if we do so, we give ourselves the right to use the words "true" and "false" well before our inquiry into the merits of the coherence theory has actually been begun. In the case of statements, this is not so reprehensible a procedure: it seems quite innocuous to take the truth of some very simple statements for granted. We have to start somewhere, in any case. However in relation to narratios we are not allowed to do this. We want to know if it is at all legitimate to say of narratios that they are either true or false. And if we have to assume that at least some narratios are either true or false in order to legitimize the concept of the truth or falsity of narratios, then we have already accepted the thesis whose acceptability was here *sub judice.*

I think we may conclude from the foregoing discussion that we cannot and should not speak of the "truth or falsity" of the narratio in the way we speak of the "truth or falsity" of statements. In one sense, nevertheless,

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14. A.R. White, Coherence theory of truth, in P. Edwards ed., *The encyclopedia of philosophy* Vol II, London 1967; p. 130.

the phrase "(un)true narratio" can be meaningful, viz. in the case of ethical or legal reasoning where "standards" on which to model narratios are available. If a narratio correctly answers all the questions arising from the "standard narratio" used with regard to a specific, historical occasion, it is not wholly improper to say that the resulting narratio is true. In so far as historiography differs from ethical and juridical reasoning, such locutions are not permitted. Our discussions, then, have made sufficiently clear, I hope, that the phrases "the truth (and falsity) of a narratio" are phrases that have to be rejected.

Of course we cannot prohibit the use of the words "true" and "false" in a narrative sense and it is not my wish to improve upon ordinary language. The purpose of my discussion was solely to demonstrate that in a *philosophical* argument the phrases "the truth (and falsity) of a narratio" should be shunned. At least, it should be realized that the terms "true" and "false" when used to characterize narratios have a meaning quite distinct from the meaning they have when used to characterize statements. I am very well aware that we have a natural tendency to use the words "true" and "false" to indicate the value of narratios because if there are several narratios on the same subject, their quality is bound to be different. Most people will probably agree that for all its merits C.H. de Wit's account of the last years of the Dutch Republic is of a lesser quality than Leeb's *Ideological Origins of the Batavian Revolution.* For want of a better term one has come to use the terms "true" and "false" on such occasions: "Leeb has come nearer to "the truth" on the dotage of the Dutch Republic than de Wit (or, for that matter, Schama in his recent book)". However, in order to avoid misleading analogies in a *philosophical* exposition it is better to adopt a separate term to indicate the quality of the narratio. Henceforth, I shall use the words "true" and "false" only for statements, and as their narrative analogues I propose the terms "subjective" and "objective". A good quality narratio, which in ordinary language would be said to be "true" will be called "objective", a poor quality narratio being called "subjective". Of course, the terms "objective" and "subjective" are already in use. Therefore it will be necessary to cleanse them of some of their customary connotations; after this has been done, they will turn out to be admirably suited to serving as the narrative counterparts of the statemental concepts "true" and "false". However, it will only be at the end of Chapter VIII that a close examination of the expression "the objectivity of the narratio" can be undertaken.

CHAPTER IV
NARRATIVE IDEALISM VERSUS NARRATIVE REALISM

(1) *Introduction.* The narrativist philosopher who does not venture to abandon the concepts "the truth (or falsity of a narratio" (like Fain or Gorman) is deluded by an *idée fixe:* that of the statement. True statements correspond to extra-linguistic reality in a way defined by the meaning and the reference of the statement; likewise the defender of the concept "the truth (or falsity) of the narratio" expects some kind of correspondence to exist between the content of the narratio and the historical reality depicted in it. He regards the narratio as a kind of *picture* of the past: there is a verifiable correspondence between photographs and pictures — taken as a whole as well as in detail — and that part of visible reality depicted by them. And it is believed that there is a similar correspondence between the narratio and the past. I shall call the adherents of this "picture theory" narrative realists[1]. Narrative idealism, on the other hand, rejects the picture theory; the consequences of this rejection will be discussed in section (3) of this chapter.

(2) *The past has no narrative structure.* Narrative realism is a very plausible theory and I think that we are all, intuitively, inclined to accept it. Since such all-pervasive convictions have a tendency to be obscure and ill-defined, I will now scrutinize the unspoken and implicit assumptions behind narrative realism. Our most naive narrative realist intuition is that the narratio should be seen as the verbalization of all the individual images of a film made of the past. Each individual image is, in this conception, the analogue of a statement and the whole film that of the narratio. It is obvious that narrative realism has been inspired by the reductionist thesis we encountered in Chapter III: accepting reductionism, it seems reasonable to say that the truth of the narratio as a whole is a function of the truth of the verbalizations, in the form of statements, of all the individual film images. The narrative model that corresponds to this narrativist realist assumption has the following form: at t_1: S_1(ituation), at t_2: S_2 etc. We forget, however, that the film-producer has very distinct ideas on what should and what should not be filmed. So what is filmed does not correspond to the actual past — as this variant of narrative realism suggests — but to a selection of the past.

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1. In his *Tractatus* Wittgenstein develops his "picture-theory" on the relation between the true statement and that part of reality described in it (see especially numbers 2.1, 2.12, 2.141, 2.1513, 2.1514 and 2.17). Translating this theory into a theory on the relation between the narratio and historical reality gives one a good idea of what is meant by the term "narrative realism". It might be added that the scientific ideal of the model-builders of the New Economic History is identical with the epistemology advanced by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus.*

The position of the narrative realist is much harder to attack when he bases his case upon the following simile. Take a machine and a working drawing of that machine. For the narrative realist the relation between the actual past and its narrative account is of the same type as the relation between the machine and its working-drawing. We can deduce the actual movements of the machine from the working drawing; likewise we can, according to the narrative realist, deduce the actual machinery of the past from what the narratio reports. Essential to this simile is this. The idea that the narratio is analogous to the working-drawing suggests that there should be certain, what we might call "translation rules" that we ought to obey when "translating" or "projecting" the actual past onto the linguistic level of the narratio. Likewise there are rules that enable us to reconstruct the actual working of a machine from its working-drawing and rules that prescribe how a machine should be represented in a working-drawing.

The nature of these translation rules has been very aptly characterized by Perelman. He says that the task of the historian to give an objective account of the past and of past events makes him think of "une carte à relief qui correspondrait avec exactitude au relief du terrain: tout comme l'on represente 1'importance d'une chaîne de montagnes par sa projection sur une carte, on devrait pouvoir déterminer d'une façon univoque 1'importance de chaque événement historique et de chaque facteur qui a contribué à sa production. L'idéal de la connaissance historique consisterait en une représentation aussi fidèle que possible d'un réel historique préalable: ce serait la le sens de 1'objectivité en histoire"[2]. Perelman admits that this ideal is not attainable; historical documents have too many gaps, we have little or no information on too many aspects of the past. The suggestion is, however, that history should have at its disposal (a set of) translation rules analogous to the rules for cartographical projection, which would enable us to translate the past into narrative language. The past is supposed to be something *given* to the historian, it lies before him just like a landscape; it only has to be transposed into a narratio by means of these translations rules for "historiographical projection".

Behind a good deal of philosophizing on history lurks the narrative realist's conviction that there are certain "translation rules" governing the relation between a past unambiguously given to the historian and the narrative representation of this past. The following three illustrations may serve to provide an insight into the substance of narrative realism. Recent exhortations to transform history into a "social science" owe much, if not all, of their appeal to the implicit though omnipresent confidence in the existence of such translation rules. Many historians were (and still are) worried by what they believe to be the "ineradicable subjectivity" of the narrative historiography which they produce. If intersubjectively acceptable translation rules could be found it would be possible to

2. Perelman (2); p. 361.

translate historical reality into narrative language in a way agreeable to all who are ready to subscribe to such rules. Obviously, the theories or models of the social sciences are the most eligible candidates for providing historians with these intersubjectively acceptable translation rules. Whatever data of the past can make their way into the variables of such theories or models can be projected "objectively" unto the level of a linguistic representation of the past.

The same pattern of argument we find, curiously enough, in the early 20th century German philosophy of value. Rickert's admirable lecture on the differences between the exact sciences and the cultural sciences is, therefore, my second illustration. For Rickert, history was the paradigm of the cultural sciences, because psychology, sociology etc. have too much in common with the exact sciences to be entitled to this honour. How does the historian gain his knowledge of the past according to Rickert? Knowing that the historian cannot give a copy or duplicate of the past "an sich", he concludes that the historian's work should not be considered "als ein Abbilden, sondern nur als ein Umbilden des gegebenen Vorstellungsmaterials"[3]. How does the historian achieve this "Umbildung"? Rickert answers: "die Wissenschaft bedarf (...) fur die Auswahl des Wesentlichen eines leitenden Prinzips"[4] . And what could this "leitende Prinzip" be but the supreme criterion distinguishing the cultural from the exact sciences, viz. the principle of value? By looking at history from the point of view of values (and this constituted the specific nature of historical inquiry) we have provided historical reality with the "transcendental" structure with enables the historian to write an account of the past. Rickert writes: "aus der unübersehbaren Fülle der Objekte [in the past (FA)] berücksichtigt der Historiker zunächst nur die welche in ihrer individuellen Eigenart entweder selbst Kulturwerthe verkörpern oder mit ihnen in Beziehung stehen, und aus der unübersehbaren Fülle, die jedes Einzelne ihm darbietet, wählt er sodann wiederum nur das aus, woran die Bedeutung für die Kulturentwicklung hängt. Für die historische Begriffsbildung liefern die Kulturwerthe also das Prinzip zur Auswahl des Wesentlichen ebenso, wie der Begriff der Natur als der Wirklichkeit mit Rücksicht auf das Allgemeine dies für die Naturwissenschaften thut"[5]. Similar observations can be found in the writings of such philosophers of the nature of history as Weber, Simmel or Meinecke. The idea always is that values can perform the function of the translation rules that enable the historian to translate the manifold historical phenomena into a meaningful historical narrative. It will be obvious that Rickert's recommendation to the historian is equal to that of the protagonists of "history as a social science". In both cases the historian is offered a set of translation rules, either in the form of value systems or of socio-

3. Rickert; p. 28.
4. Rickert; p. 35.
5. Rickert; p. 47. A more detailed exposition of Rickert's relevant ideas can be found in H. Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung,* Tübingen 1921; pp. 231-256.

scientific theories, which, it is claimed, indicate how to translate the historical past into the language of historiography. And both philosophies of history are based upon the (implicit) conviction that historiography is essentially a *projection* in historical language of past reality in conformity with these translation rules.

Hayden White's much discussed study of the nineteenth century historical imagination is my third illustration. White's position is so interesting because it is a kind of transitionary phase between narrative realism and narrative idealism. Certain assumptions as to the nature of historical reality were essential in the two preceding illustrations: historical reality should be identified either with what socio-scientific theories are about or with what is known as "Kulturwerthe". Only on the basis of these assumptions did the proposed translation rules make sense. White, on the other hand, explicitly rejects all claims as to the nature of historical reality and thus comes closer to narrative idealism. Nevertheless, he cannot bring himself to abandon the translation rules of narrative realism.

I do not wish to enter here into all the intricacies of White's narrativist philosophy, so I shall confine myself to what is relevant to the present discussion. The past as such, White argues, cannot be understood by us: in itself the past is a meaningless myriad of facts, states and events, an amorphous chaos of data that successfully resists "conscious apprehension" by the historian[6]. Therefore the historian has to translate the "prose" of the historical past into the narrative "poetry" of historiography. The four rhetorical tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony are capable of achieving this translation. These four tropes, each in its own way, make a selection or abstraction from the initial chaos of historical reality and thus succeed in making history intelligible to us. For instance, metaphor may form a part — (that which is mentioned in the narratio) — to-whole (the historical past itself) relation that can be characterized as "symbolic": for Michelet, "Le Peuple" was the symbol of the French Revolution — consequently, the abstraction procedure he follows could be called "metaphoric". Alternatively, in metonymy we arrange the phenomena of the past according to criteria that are in a sense external to history itself: a scientific or theoretical approach to the past (theories are things of the mind and not in the past itself) clearly embraces a metonymical analysis of the past. Unfortunately, White fails to explain why the four tropes possess the remarkable capacities he credits them with. This is probably due to his partial abandonment of narrative realism. On the basis of an assumption on the nature of historical reality and the relation between its constituent parts, he could have made out a good case for his tropes. As it is now, his opting for the four tropes to function as the translation rules that enable the historian to translate the past into the narratio remains entirely arbitrary.

I admit that there is still another way out for White. He could have

6. White (1); p. 34.

offered a "transcendental deduction" (to use a Kantian term) for his four tropes: i.e. he could have tried to prove that knowledge of the past is only made possible by these four tropes. It seems likely that Rickert, being a neo-Kantian, wished to follow such a strategy when he argued for his "Kulturwerthe" as translation rules. However, by insisting that the historian's task is to study a specific kind of historical *object* (i.e. those objects in which "irgend ein vom Menschen anerkannter Werth verkorpert ist"[7]) he has virtually abandoned this transcendental approach for a metaphysical one. In this connection, it should be noted that in the remainder of this book the transcendental procedure will be followed (see Chapter II, section (9). We shall discover that, unlike the translation rules of narrative realism, the transcendental narrativist rules do not pretend to guide the historian in solving the problem of how to "translate" the past into a narratio, but that they only determine the logical structure of narrative accounts of the past. Of course, *such* rules can no longer be said to be translation rules.

Apart from this consideration, I have two further objections to the picture theory of narrative realism. In the first place, narrative realism has a built-in tendency to confuse things which should be kept apart. Narrative realism is a philosophical theory on how historical reality and its narrative account are, or ought to be, related. As such, it has, or is supposed to have, its implications for the domains of ontology, epistemology and of the social sciences. When we consider the narrative realist a little more closely we discover that his views contain a number of ambiguities that easily give rise to the confusing of these three domains. As explained on page 81, the social sciences are the most eligible candidates for providing intersubjectively acceptable translation rules. Besides the merits of these sciences in themselves, the narrative realist tends to attribute an epistemological status to them, asserting that only *these* rules enable us to become acquainted with the past. Thus the social scientific and epistemological levels are easily confused; the programme for changing history into "a social science" owes much of its apparent plausibility to this tendency.

Secondly, it is maintained by the adherent of hermeneutic theory that we can only understand history (the epistemological level) because, and in so far as there is an ontological equality between object (the historical agent in the past) and subject (the historian). Here the idealism inherent in all hermeneutic theories results in ontology being confused with epistemology. Indeed, the perennial aversion of hermeneutic theory to mechanistic interpretations of historical knowledge should not blind us to the fact that hermeneutics is just as much a narrative realist theory (complete with translation rules) as, for instance, the ideal of a socio-scientific historiography. For in hermeneutic theory the historian's experience of life constitutes the translation rules that enable him to understand and describe the past.

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7. Rickert; p. 20.

Thirdly, there is the confusion of the ontological with the socio-scientific levels. This results in the belief that what the translation rules are capable of transmitting to the linguistic representation of the past is the essence of the past. Of course, like the first instance of confusion, this one can often be detected in pleas for transforming history into a social science. But the propaganda emanating from the adherents of this view is merely the modern variant of a much older tradition: i.e. that of the speculative philosophies of history. Both approaches to history have generated an ontology of history that is based upon the (tacit) acceptance of specific translation rules. So let us consider speculative philosophies as the more common form of this confusion[8].

The popularity of some of the more suggestive speculative philosophies has done much to further the cause of the picture theory, because a) they depict the past for us as a kind of machine operated by the Cunning of Reason or the class struggle and b) they thus provide the historian with a set of translation rules, the evolution of the Absolute Mind or of the class struggle being the matrices for the historian's description of the past. Speculative philosophies have been severely criticized in recent years, particularly because they frequently, though not always, claim that they should be able to foretell the future. Popper has conclusively shown in his well-known book on speculative systems that speculative philosophers attempting to foretell the future commit themselves to the "holist fallacy" and/or surmise analogies between history and science that do not exist[9]. But the use of such speculative philosophies exclusively within the domain of historiography proper (that is, without references to the future) has not been rejected by Popper. In fact, it seems that he is quite happy with such a use of speculative philosophies[10]; he even stresses the necessity of choosing a point of view in conformity with some philosophy of history when narratios are to be written. We have seen that this idea was elaborated by Haskell Fain: according to Fain, the historian who wants to regard the past as a socio-economic process cannot but rely on the Marxist speculative philosophy of history, whether he is aware of it or not. In Chapter II I argued that a peculiar kind of historiographical Cartesianism can be traced in such conceptions. However, in the light of the present discussion, it can be pointed out that the very narrative realism inherent in speculative philosophies should already rouse our suspicion. Speculative philosophies are either regarded as just ordinary, although interesting, narratios (but then they cannot claim the very special function Popper and Fain wish to credit them with), or they are considered to be some kind of "master narratios" (but then recourse to narrative realism becomes inevitable) (see also Chapter VII, section (4)).

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8. The similarity of the approach to history advocated by speculative philosophers of history and by the protagonists of a socio-scientific historiography, has already been pointed out by White. Cf. H. White (4); p. 5 ff.
9. Popper (2); Chapter III, section (4).
10. Popper (2); Chapter IV, section (5); see also Popper (4)..

It should be emphasized that these three instances of confusion are not merely accidental to the picture theory of narrative realism. They are not the unfortunate consequences of some regrettable negligence on the part of narrative realists. On the contrary, the picture theory depends for its very existence on a confusion of the ontological, epistemological and socio-scientific domains. For as soon as the epistemological and the socio-scientific levels, for instance, are distinguished, two separate sets of translation rules (if the term is still usable) appear; viz. one for each of the two levels — and the whole model collapses. The priority of socio-scientific translation rules can only be argued with the help of an epistemological demonstration or vice versa: thus the domains are inextricably tied up with one another. The same is true for the other two instances of confusion.

Now I come to my second, more fundamental, objection to the narrative realist picture theory. Not according to any current interpretation of the words "projection" or "picture" can the narratio be called a "projection" or "picture" of historical reality. And whatever concrete content we may give to the translation rules, they will never be more than arbitrary selection rules, acceptable to some historians but to be rejected by others. The past is by no means like a machine: it does not posses some hidden mechanism whose workings the historian has to trace. Nor is the past like a landscape that has to be projected onto the linguistic level with the help of projection or translation rules. For the "historical landscape" is not *given* to the historian; he has to *construct* it. The narratio is not the projection of a historical landscape or of some historical machinery, the past is only *constituted* in the narratio. The structure of the narratio is a structure *lent* to or *pressed* on the past and not the reflection of a kindred structure objectively present in the past itself. We should reject "the idea that there is a determinate historical actuality, the complex referent of all our narratives of "what actually happened", the untold story to which narrative histories approximate" (Mink)[11]. In the same vein, Huizinga has already pointed out that it is wrong, although quite enticing, to believe that the "es" in Ranke's dictum that the historian should represent the past "wie es eigentlich gewesen", should refer to something fixed and with incontestably having the same contours for all historians[12]. On the contrary, historical discussions are not concerned with how to reproduce this "es", but with what narrative content can best be given to this "es".

All this means that the past as such has no narrative structure — narrative structures occur only in the narratio. Munz reminds us in this connection of Poincaré's observation that "there is no time over and above the various clocks we have. We can compare one clock to another clock; but we cannot compare any clock to time and it makes therefore no sense to ask which of the many clocks we have is *correct.* The same is true

11. Mink (6); p. 148.
12. Huizinga; p. 44.

of any story, including historical narratives. We cannot glimpse at history. We can only compare one book with another book"[13]. Given this morphological or structural difference between the past and the narratio, how can translation rules ever be expected to link them together? Projection or translation rules can exist only where there are two corresponding spheres of structural similarity. But the objects in the past so often mentioned by historians, objects such as intellectual, social or political movements and even nations or social groups, have no status in the past itself independent of the narratio: they spring from and are justified solely by the narratio. In describing these "things" the historian does, in a sense, describe the past; however, he shows it in disguise. The task of the historian resembles, if I may make a rather commonplace comparison, that of a dress-designer who wants to show his creations. The dress-designer uses dummies or preferably models to display their qualities, i.e. things or women that do not form part of the clothes and dresses themselves. Just letting the dresses lie around in a disorderly pile will not do. Similarly, the historian uses concepts such as "intellectual movement", "Renaissance", "social group" or "industrial Revolution" in order "to dress up" the past. The past is shown by means of entities that do not form part of the past itself and that do not even refer to actual historical phenomena or aspects of such phenomena. This is what I would like to call narrative idealism. It requires us to be continually aware of the structural gap between the past and the narratio; it affirms the structural autonomy of the narratio and draws attention to the purely linguistic narrative rules that govern the narratio. There are certain rules, I assume, for displaying the merits of dresses; likewise narrative idealism claims that narrativist rules, or a "narrative logic", can be discovered for properly displaying in a narratio what the historical sources tell us about the past.

(3) *"Seeing as ..." in historiography.* We should be wary, then, of intuitively looking upon the narratio as the reflection of an inherent structure in the past. We do not "see" the past as it is, as we see a tree,

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13. Munz (2); p. 221. See also pp. 16-7: "for the truth of the matter is that there is no ascertainable face behind the various masks every story-teller, be he a historian, poet, novelist, or myth-maker, is creating. He is telling a story and the story is all we have. Nor can the problem be resolved by treating it as a problem of translation. For whereas we can translate a photograph into a painting and a painting, taking its life into our hands, into a verbal statement and an English text into a Russian text, we cannot translate what actually happened (i.e., the flow of time) into anything. We can translate what somebody *thought* happened into another language and seek to establish equivalences between different media - at least up to a point. But we cannot translate reality; for to do so we would have to have a picture of or a text about it in the first place. (...) But the ineluctable truth is that there is no face behind the mask and that the belief that there is is an unsupportable allegation. For any record we could have of the face would be, precisely, another mask. We cannot have proof that it is a genuine "record" of the face and every possible glimpse of the face would be, by its nature, another mask".

a machine or a landscape as it is; we see the past only through a masquerade of narrative structures (while behind this masquerade there is nothing that has a narrative structure). Here lies the difference between "seeing as ..." in the sciences and "seeing as ..." in historiography. There is no "seeing as ..." given as a starting point in historical inquiry (as speculative philosophers and their hesitant supporters such as Popper and Fain believe) as there is in the exact sciences. In the exact sciences, familiar, every-day theories or regularities form our initial "seeing as ...", and thus the point of departure is given to us. Moreover, our initial "seeing as ..." can be and has been refined throughout the history of the exact sciences. The evolution of the exact sciences could aptly be described as a continuous process of elaborating and refining earlier modes of "seeing as ...". Every new phase in their development represents a correction of an earlier "seeing as ...".

In historiography things are quite different. A particular "seeing as ..." is not the point of departure in historical inquiry (in order to elaborate, apply or emend it): a "seeing as ..." only comes in conclusion, as the result of a historical investigation. This explains why historiography is rarely, if ever, cumulative in character; although for details the historian may rely on work done by others, when he writes his article or book he essentially has to make a fresh start. There are no permanent results in historiography; there is not — nor will there ever be - a book on a general historical subject that is accepted by all historians as the embodiment of a final "seeing as ..." leaving room for research on points of detail only. In contrast to the exact sciences, it is not the "seeing as ..." but the details that are generally accepted in historiography. Since "scientific historiography" came into being at the beginning of the last century, historiography has never had its Newtons and Einsteins and if ever a historian were to be honoured that way, historiography would die a partial death. Of course, "scientific" historiography does have its eminent historians such as Ranke, Pirenne, Hazard, Febvre, Namier, Braudel, Talmon or Duby. However, even during their lifetimes their proposals for a "seeing as ..." were often superseded by other proposals. On the other hand, eminent physicists like Newton, Einstein, Planck or Schrödinger have at times determined a part of scientific inquiry for many decades. The reason is that unlike the scientist, the historian does not start but only ends with a "seeing as ...". And the *results* of an inquiry (i.e. a "seeing as ...") cannot and ought not be inspired by what has been argued by others (i.e. other "seeings as ..."). For what could possibly be the purpose of such inquiries? In the sciences it is customary to *elaborate* on some given or generally accepted "seeing as ..."; so *there* it is usually inevitable to start with the acceptance of a former "seeing as ...".

I am aware that recent developments in the philosophy of the exact sciences seem to indicate that the differences between historiography and the exact sciences are smaller than I have just suggested. Even in the exact sciences, a former "seeing as ..." is sometimes superseded by a

radically new "seeing as ...". Consequently, to characterize the exact sciences, as I have done, as a form of inquiry exclusively concerned with the gradual elaboration of a former "seeing as ..." may be only part of the truth. I admit that there may be a certain analogy between the ordinary progress of historiography and what happens in the exact sciences during periods of so-called "scientific revolutions". Although it is beyond my competence to formulate an opinion on this matter, my natural reaction is to regard such analogies with the utmost suspicion: in the past, they have already caused many unfortunate misunderstandings. Furthermore, the difference between the continuity in the development of scientific knowledge during the periods of "normal science" research and the historians' habit of constantly remodelling their interpretation of the past, is far too great to be ignored. If anything, historiography does in a way resemble science in its "preparadigmatic" period (of course, this remark is not meant to suggest that history will ever become a science on Kuhn's terms). It is not to be denied that there are considerable resemblances between historiographies dating from one and the same period. Thus we could speak of historiographical *fashions.* But I do not believe that these fashions should be considered the historiographical counterparts of Kuhn's "paradigms". For instance, does historiography have its "paradigm changes"? Differences between the event-orientated historiography of the beginning of this century and e.g. the structuralist historiographies of the French Annales-school have sometimes been labelled "paradigm changes". But then, what are the "unsolvable problems" of the former tradition and the "ad-hoc solutions" (Kuhn's terminology) proposed to solve them? The fact that these questions are manifestly absurd shows how unacceptable it is to transfer Kuhn's theory to the domain of historiography. It may be argued that each particular historiography on an aspect of the past constitutes a "paradigm" in itself. But that would, of course, be violating the concept "paradigm"[14] .

"Seeing as ..." is not the beginning but the result of a historical inquiry. Take the well-known rabbit-duck drawing of Jastrow-Wittgen-stein. In order to recognize a rabbit or a duck in the drawing one must primarily know how rabbits and ducks are usually depicted. And such knowledge, such "mental images" — a condition necessary for each "seeing as ..." — are absent in historiography in contrast to the exact sciences where even the most simple regularity known from our daily experience can fulfil this function (i.e. provide a paradigm for a "seeing as ..."). However, one might ask, does it not happen often enough that historians correct their predecessors? Such corrections could be interpreted as a continual refinement of earlier historiographical "seeing as ...". Despite its apparent plausibility this inference does not hold. One can speak of a continual refinement of a certain "seeing as ..." only if such refinements

14. For Kuhn's reservations about the applicability of his ideas outside the sciences, see Kuhn; pp. 208-9.

are all related to theories, hypotheses and so on (roughly) bearing on the same kind of phenomena. This condition is more or less met in the exact sciences (I am disregarding Feyerabend's and Sneed's reservations on this subject) but not in historiography. When in physics there are two rival theories, the explanation of a (more or less) fixed aspect of reality is at stake in the discussion between the adherents of the competing theories. Two theories are "competing theories" only if they both refer to (roughly) the same kind of phenomena.

Even if the incommensurability of competing scientific theories is strongly emphasized, a conspicuous difference between science and historiography remains. When, for instance, the English historian Trevor-Roper criticizes the well-known Weber-thesis without completely denying the existence of a certain relation between Calvinism and the rise of Capitalism[15], he has entirely different historical phenomena in mind than Weber had. Weber thought of theological phenomena; Trevor-Roper, on the other hand, tells us how a large number of bankers in the Roman-Catholic countries, frightened by the austerities of the Counter-Reformation, left their native countries in search of a more tolerant political climate. In short, there is a looseness in historical discussion that has no parallel in the exact sciences: the relation between Capitalism and Calvinism can be studied from the point of view of religion and from the point of view of the emigration of a financial élite. Probably both points of view might even be represented in one and the same book, which would certainly be a very odd thing to do in the exact sciences. For instance, one can look for the antecedents of the French Revolution on an intellectual level (as Daniel Mornet has done) and study its socio-economic causes as well (as Labrousse has done)[16]. The problem in historiography is that questions like the one concerning the relation between Capitalism and Calvinism or the origins of the French Revolution are ambiguous to such an extent that there is room for all these approaches. When we ask what the origins of the French Revolution are we are not asking a clear-cut question. Having to answer it puts the historian in a position quite different from that of the physicist asked to explain why friction causes heat or why a compass-needle deviates when an electric current comes near to it.

The differences between "seeing as ..." in the exact sciences and in historiography may be exemplified as follows. The physicist arrives at his kinetic theory of gases by way of a mathematical elaboration of "seeing" the molecules of a gas "as" completely elastic little spheres; the historian, on the other hand, has only to attempt to *develop* such a *Gestalt,* such a "seeing as ...". The historian's task is completed when he has demonstrated that the late Middle Ages in Northern Europe

15. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Religion. The Reformation and social change, in id., *Religion, the Reformation and social change,* London 1972.
16. D. Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*, Paris 1967 (1st ed. 1933), E. Labrousse, La crise de l'économie Française à la fin de l'Ancien Régime et au début de la Révolution, Paris 1944.

should not be "seen as" the *beginning* of a new epoch but rather as the *end* of what historical reality was before that time (cf. Huizinga's *Herfsttij).* What is mere heuristics in the exact sciences, is the whole of historiography.

From these considerations it should not be concluded that the historian — just like his colleague from the exact sciences — could mathematically elaborate the *Gestalt* he has proposed in order to come to a truly scientific study of the past. When in the exact sciences something (say: system S_1) is seen in the terms of something else (say: system S_2) this serves its purpose only if system S_2 is better known than system S_1 and therefore, as is the case in the example of the kinetic theory of gases, permits mathematization. We say that system S_2 is better known than system S_1 (think of the elastic spheres of the kinetic gas theory) when a (preferaby mathematical) description of S_2 can be conceived of that solves the relevant problems of S_2 — and, in consequence, of S_1. But it is utterly impossible to imagine a description of a narratio that should solve the problems pertaining to this narratio and, in consequence, the problems of the relevant part of the past itself. In the exact sciences a "seeing as ..." is logically distinct from the description of physical reality inspired by it; in the narratio no such distinction is possible. The difference between "seeing as ..." in historiography and in the exact sciences, is, fundamentally, that in the exact sciences the meaning of the *Gestalt* is already given. To speak in the language of the rabbit-duck drawing, the physicist knows beforehand how ducks and rabbits are usually drawn, wheras the historian does not. The content of the physicist's experience of reality is always greatly influenced by relevant theories of an older date or, perhaps, by expectations based on daily experience. The conscientious historian, on the other hand, who does not wish merely to paraphrase his predecessors, is never in such a favourable position. The historian who is dealing with British colonial expansion or with family life in Medieval Germany has no fixed patterns, paradigms or analogies he can rely upon. He has no models in terms of which he could try to translate his problem. In fact, his actual purpose is to construct such a model and if he succeeds he may be satisfied with having accomplished his task.

(4) *Conclusion.* At first glance, it may seem as if surrendering the narrative realist position is tantamount to abandoning all certainty in history. However, we can expect some solace from the philosophy of the exact sciences, because the idea that they should describe what *really* happens in nature was given up as early as the time of Mach and Helmholtz[17]; or, if one would prefer to go back as far as that, since the time of Kant's *Copernican Revolution.* And for our time a "scientific idealism" (analogous to the narrative idealism advocated in this Chapter) has been formulated with nearly existentialist *pathos* by Popper: "the empirical basis of objective science thus has nothing "absolute" about it. Science does not rest upon solid bed-rock. The bold structures of its

17. Mandelbaum (2); Chapter 14.

theories arise, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles. The piles are driven down from above in the swamp, but not down to any natural or "given" base; and if we stop driving these piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure at least for the time being"[18]. A similar situation obtains in historiography: there is no past that could serve as bedrock for our narratios and there are no translation rules that could serve as the indestructible piles to buttress the narratio. Yet Popper never concluded - and was never compelled to conclude — that the study of nature and the discovery of scientific theories should be regarded as purely arbitrary. If, then, we give up our intuitive confidence in a machine-like or mappable past that is linked to the narratio by translation rules, this does not in the least compel us to decide that historiography expresses nothing but the whim or the moral and aesthetic values of individual historians. If philosophers of history and of science nevertheless tend to draw that kind of conclusions (unfortunately there is a tendency in that direction in much writing on history) this shows merely that not history itself, but the philosophy of history is on the wrong track. Much historical scepticism and relativism is due to the confusion between an awareness of narrative idealism — inspired by being acquainted with actual historiographical practice — and narrow narrative realist convictions. The fluidity of historical interpretations is contrasted with the fixity of the historical past — and the result is scepticism. Becker's essay on historical facts is a striking illustration of this relativist fallacy[19].

Our task wil now be to discover the mechanism enabling the historian to give a narrative representation of the past. We know that a narrative structure cannot be attributed to the past as such, and we do not possess a set of translation rules either. That means that if we want to know more about this mechanism we shall have to analyze the narrative level separately. Clearly, there are certain rules governing the narratio which we cannot risk ignoring. If the past itself, contrary to the hypothesis underlying narrative realism, does not force upon us specific ways in which it *should* be represented in a narratio, and, on the other hand, rules apparently do exist for the narrative representation of the past, then we must conclude that such rules can only be found by means of an inquiry into the nature of our narrative knowledge of the past. This is the position I have called "narrative idealism". Maybe the word "idealism" is a bit strong. I am certainly not suggesting that we should be able to discover the nature of historical reality by means of an a priori inquiry into narrative philosophy[20]. I merely use the term "narrative

18. Popper (1); p. 111. It should be noted that there is also an important realist strand in Popper's thought: cf. K.R. Popper, *Conjectures and refutations,* New York 1965; Chapter 3, section (6).
19. C.L. Becker, What are historical facts, in H. Meyerhoff ed., *The philosophy of history in our time,* New York 1959.
20. Neither is the term "narrative idealism" an invitation to resuscitate (an interest

idealism" to underline the fact that the narratio has a quite particular autonomy, embodied in the logical structure of our narrative knowledge of the past and of narrative accounts of the past. In a similar way the physicist is obliged to present the results of his inquiry in an orderly and logical way. Only in this transcendental way can narrative logic be said to constitute the structure of our knowledge of the past. However, the facts in history (i.e. what is expressed in statements in a narratio) can only be established by a close and thorough investigation of documents and primary sources.

Nevertheless, I believe that in historical critique, scholarly discussions, reviews and critical notes, practical applications of narrative logic play a very significant, hitherto unnoticed role. In scholarly reviews the truth of the facts mentioned in the historiography under discussion is only rarely challenged. The reviewers do not verify the study a historian has made of his sources. The reason is not that the reviewer is too lazy or that such a task would be too cumbersome to accomplish — although very often that may be the case as well — but that reviewers rightly take the truth of the facts mentioned for granted. Only in some very rare cases — take the historiography produced in Nazi-Germany or in the Russia of Stalin — is this attitude obviously over-optimistic. When reviewers criticize historiographies, they most often point out inconsistencies in the historian's work itself or inconsistencies between the work and other well-known historical accounts. In other words, they show the *narrative* shortcomings of the work under discussion, the failure in this particular historiography to live up to narrative standards of consistency and explicitness. Similarly, experienced history lecturers have little difficulty in pointing out the mistakes in essays written by their undergraduate students, even if they know next to nothing of their subject-matter. Finally, then, we can say that according to narrative idealism there is a narrative logic which structures our knowledge of the past, while according to narrative realism, the "structure of the past itself should exclusively determine the ultimate structure of our narrative knowledge of the past.

But, we may ask, what does such a narrative logic look like, in what way does it plays its rôle in the construction of narratios: how can narrative logic account for traditional problems such as the subjectivity or

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for) speculative philosophies of history. It is a peculiar illness afflicting much of contemporary philosophy of history that in spite of the perennial aversion of historians to speculative systems, many philosophers of history nowadays are tending to become more and more accomodating towards speculative systems. The cause of this illness is probably a dissatisfaction with current Anglo-Saxon philosophy of history because it is so exclusively interested in the details or the elements of historiography (i.e. the problems of historical *research).* Many philosophers of history are now looking for a theory on the more synthetical aspects of historical accounts of the past. Speculative philosophies of history seem to provide the most obvious point of departure for the development of such theories. However, in my opinion, *both* extremes should be avoided and I think that only a narrativist philosophy of history enables us to do so.

objectivity of historical writing or the problem of historical explanation? In the following chapters I shall try to answer these questions.

CHAPTER V
NARRATIVE SUBJECTS AND NARRATIVE SUBSTANCES

While the preceding chapter was a relatively relaxed journey through a philosophical flat-land, we now see the first mountain ridges of narrative logic dimly silhouetted against the sky. In this chapter and the next, our journey will be long and arduous, but at the end we shall have left behind us a number of the most important mountain passes of narrative logic. We may hope to avoid the mists of inapplicable concepts as well as the ravines of narrative realism.

(1) *Narrative subjects and narrative substances.* Every narratio has one or more subjects. Misleading though this statement may be in some respects we may accept it for the moment. If we take a reductionist, or narrative realist view of the narratio (both positions being intrinsically related, as we saw in chapter IV) we have little difficulty in determining the subjects of a narratio. In an uncomplicated example of a narratio — such as a biography of Napoleon — the individual statements of the biographical narratio that assert something about Napoleon, refer to the *historical* Napoleon, the human being of flesh and blood who lived from 1769 to 1821 and became Emperor of the French. Thus, from the narrative realist point of view it seems reasonable to say that the (narrative) subject of the narratio is formed by those proper names (e.g. "Napoleon", "Bonaparte") or those identifying descriptions that refer to this *historical* Napoleon. However, from the point of view of the narratio or of narrative idealism, the individual statements of the narratio should be thought of as each contributing something to the "image" or "picture" of Napoleon's life and times that his biographer wants to present to his public. From this perspective each individual statement on Napoleon when taken as a whole is, in a sense, a property of such an "image" of Napoleon and this "picture" or "image" could, therefore, *also* be said to be the "subject of the narratio". (We saw in Chapter IV that these terms "image" or "picture" of (part of) the past may easily give rise to misleading associations, but at present we have no alternatives; indeed, the main concern of this section will be to provide ourselves with better terminology). If we read the written text, as the narrative realist does, as a conjunction of statements (on Napoleon) we discover only statements on past reality. From that point of view narratios appear to consist of statements referring to human beings who lived in the past, or - in non-biographical historiography - to all those things or states of affairs that make up the upholstery of past reality. But from the point of view of the narrative idealist, who takes the narratio as a consistent and meaningful whole, everything asserted in the narratio is seen as a contribution to the "image" or "picture" of the past which the historian wants to present

to us.

I would now like to consider a somewhat more interesting example than a biography of Napoleon. There are two ways in which terms like "conservatism" of "nationalism" can be used; firstly, the terms may refer to actual political opinions held by actual people in the past or in the present (this is their narrative realist use). Secondly, they may denote technical historiographical concepts used to *organize* our knowledge of the past without referring to the past or describing it (and this corresponds to the narrative idealist view of the narratio). In the latter case, the content of such political opinions is placed, so to speak, within quotation marks. In this respect our "images" or "pictures" of the past differ even from Weber's "Idealtypes": although nothing in actual historical reality may correspond with such an "Ideal-type" when taken in its totality, each separate part corresponds with something in the past. "Idealtypes" are compilations of descriptions of (parts of) the actual past. But even parts of these "images" of "pictures" of the past neither refer to the past nor describe it, because they are merely instruments for organizing or giving form to our knowledge of the past. Lastly, "Idealtypes" denote a set of socio-cultural features common to a specific range of historical phenomena, whereas "images" of "pictures" of the past attempt to connect that which shows *no* apparent similarities. "Idealtypes" are formalist and analytical, "images" or "pictures" of the past are holist and synthetical.

But to return to our example: the fact that not only philosophers of history but sometimes working historians also get these two uses of terms like "conservatism" confused, proves how imperative it is that the distinction should be made.[1] Indeed, much theorizing in history and in the social sciences is vitiated by the tendency to confuse, for instance, (components of) political opinions themselves with the historiographical or narrativist concepts used for representing them. The fact that in both contexts the same name is used, explains the frequency of the confusion.

Furthermore, I must stress the immense importance of these "images" or "pictures" of the past in narrative historiography. It is no exaggeration to say that the purpose of nearly all historical writing, the only exception being some pieces of historical "research" (cf. Chapter I, section 1), is to create such "images" of "pictures". In this connection I would like to refer to a perspicacious lecture by the medievalist Southern in which he describes how he succeeded as a young boy in mastering a piece of unmanageable historical material. "It was in October 1927; I was

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1. There is, for example, a very frustrating sort of intellectual history which, when attempting to give a historical account of a historical phenomenon P, restricts itself to an enumeration of all that is known by the name P, instead of interpreting the historical phenomenon in question. A good specimen of this kind of historiography is the otherwise quite informative P. Viereck, *Conservatism,* New York 1956. A number of authors who happen to have the reputation of being conservatives are discussed without any attempt to indicate what should be seen as "conservatism".

fifteen. Like many thousands of young every year I was facing the depressing prospect of writing an essay on King Henry VII. Acres of fact of intolerable dreariness stretched out in all directions, numbing the senses. Then suddenly, out of nowhere the precious words formed themselves. I can see them yet. They were: Henry VII was the first King of England who was a business man. Wrong, of course; or right only in a peculiar sense. But no words can now express the illumination then brought by them"[2]. Thus young Southern found an "image", "picture" or, as one often says, a "thesis" on the past which allowed him to make sense of an otherwise intractable part of the past. I am sure that many other historians have had similar experiences. Anyone who has tried to write history, be it only an essay or an article, must admit that without such "pictures" or "images" the narrative writing of history is virtually impossible: they are the guiding principle in the construction of the narratio as well as its content or cognitive core. Without them the narratio disintegrates into an incoherent set of sentences. Of course not only historians use or construct such "images" or "pictures". A most effective use has been made of them in sociology, psychology and political theory as well. To mention one example, in the course of the 15th and 16th centuries, political society in Europe underwent profound changes which in many people caused a sense of disorientation. As a consequence the need was felt for a new conceptual instrument that would render political reality intelligible again. Eventually this was found in the concept of the national sovereign "state" and the interpretation of this concept as proposed by Bodin soon proved to be the most fruitful. The elaboration of this concept in 17th and 18th century political theory — of this new "image" or "picture" of social reality which was eventually to lead to the establishment of liberal parliamentary rule — was possible only after the notion of the national, sovereign "state" had been conceived of.

Sometimes such "images" or "pictures" of the past even get names of their own. For instance, terms like "Renaissance", "Enlightenment", "early modern Europe capitalism" or the "decline of the Church" are in fact names given to the "images" or "pictures" of the past proposed by historians attempting to come to grips with the past: the connotations given to these terms always embody specific historiographical interpretations of the past. (I hasten to add that it would be more accurate to speak of "Renaissances", "Enlightenment?", "early modern Europe capitalisms", and so on because there are as many of them as we have historiographical narratives on these subjects.) This does not mean, of course, that "images" or "pictures" of the past are not proposed when such generally accepted terms are not in use.

In recent philosophy of history the peculiar character of concepts like "the Renaissance", "the Enlightenment", "early modern Europe capitalism" of the "decline of the Church" has already been recognized,

2. Southern; p. 771.

particularly in the writings of W.H. Walsh. Walsh baptized these kinds of concepts "colligatory concepts" a term introduced by the 19th-century logician Whewell. According to Walsh, these "colligatory concepts" permit the historian to bring a large range of different phenomena under a common denominator. He compares them to Hegel's "das konkrete Universele": in both cases we are dealing with concepts that discern a unity (the concept itself) in diversity (the different phenomena "colligated" by the concept)[3]. Thus, the "colligatory concept" "the Renaissance" refers to such disparate phenomena as a certain style in painting, sculpture or warfare, a particular philosophy on man's destiny in this world, a particular conception of politics and of what an educated man should know. All these different aspects of European society between 1450 and 1600 the colligatory concept "the Renaissance" attempts to colligate within one consistent overall interpretation of the culture of that period. In the words of Cebik, when using colligatory concepts "to the [historical] facts the mind adds something not perceived [!]; a limited number of basic ideas or concepts"[4], "and it is the task of these concepts rather to "illumine the facts" than "to fit the facts""[5]. It seems, then, that Walsh's term "colligatory concept" is best suited to replace the terms "image" or "picture" of the past. Both terms refer to "theses" on, or "interpretations" of the historical past that function 1) as a guide to the historian in constructing his narratio and 2) as the embodiment of the content or cognitive core of historical narratios. In fact, this book might be looked upon as an attempt to elaborate Walsh's notion of the "colligatory concept".

However, I have opted for an alternative and propose the term "narrative substance" (to be abbreviated as: "Ns", plural "Nss"). Since this may seem an odd and antiquated term I shall explain why I propose it. First, the use of the term "colligatory concept" is slightly inconvenient. It suggests that certain phenomena in, or aspects, of the past *itself* should be colligated, i.e. that colligatory concepts (like "the Renaissance" etc.) should refer to historical reality. My point is, however, that such concepts do *not* refer to things in or aspects of, the past (in Chapter VI this unconventional thesis will be amplified), but exclusively to narrative *interpretations* of the past. The term "narrative substance" is much less suggestive of a reference to historical reality and is therefore preferable. This brings us to a more fundamental consideration. One should never forget that these "images" or "pictures" — narrative substances as we shall call them — are *things,* not *concepts.* Narrative substances are sets of statements and share with things such as dogs or tables the property of being able to be spoken about in statements without ever being parts of those statements themselves (only the *name* of a Ns, e.g. "the Renaissance of Hans Baron", can be part of a statement on a Ns).

3. Walsh (3); pp. 59-63.
4. Cebik (1); p. 41.
5. Walsh (2); p. 79.

Similarly, we can speak about this table, but the table in question could never be part of a statement on it. We can therefore assert of these historiographical narrative substances what Aristotle wrote about substance: "substance in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject; for instance, the individual man or horse"[6]. As will become clear in the course of this study, Leibniz's use of the concept of substance or monad is most easily adaptable to the narrativist philosophy advocated here[7] and that is why I have proposed the term "narrative substance". Nss are the primary logical entities in historiographical accounts of the past. And they are "simple" like Leibniz's monads; the statements they contain are not their constituent parts but their properties. To say that its statements are the parts of a Ns is committing a category-mistake inspired by the narrative realist view, according to which Nss are mere conjunctions of statements. Nevertheless, in so far as Walsh has elaborated his notion "colligatory concept", I completely agree with his views.

Let us summarize and re-formulate our introductory remarks. The second fundamental thesis of this book is that the statements in a narratio do not have a single but a *double* function: 1) as statements they refer to (things in or aspects of) the past (according to the narrative realist interpretation of the narratio), 2) (in addition to the first function) as the components of a narratio they are the properties of an "image" or "picture" of the past, i.e. of a "narrative substance" (in conformity with the narrative idealist interpretation of the narratio). Sometimes specific names are associated with these "images", "pictures" or "narrative substances", but most often this is not the case (from now on I will rarely, if ever, use the terms "picture" or "image" of the past so as to avoid the enticements of narrative realism). As distinct from Nss we find also "narrative subjects", the subjects we encounter when we consider the narratio — as is recommended by the narrative realists — as a mere conjunction of statements, i.e. the subject(s) of the narratio's statements. Narrative subjects, then are the subjects known from traditional theories on the nature of propositions.

Viewed in this light, the difference between narrative realism and narrative idealism can be re-stated as follows: according to narrative realism the narratio has narrative subjects only, whereas narrative idealism recognizes *two* kinds of subjects in the narratio (narrative subjects and Nss). Thus the quarrel between narrative realism and narrative idealism concerns the presence of Nss in the narratio. Reformulated in terms of philosophical logic, narrative idealism claims the presence in the narratio of, firstly, the ordinary subjects and predicates contained in simple statements on states of affairs in the past, next, of

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6. Aristotle, *Categories,* 2A11.
7. The theorems no. 1 to 9, 11, 12, 18, 38, 47, 51, 57, 58, 61 of his *Monadology* can be transposed to narrative logic. See Leibniz (2); pp. 643 ff.

the subjects and predicates of statements like "N_1 contains p" (= "N_1 is P"), or "N, contains q" (= "N_1 is Q") that express the narrative meaning of the statements of the narratio. The narrative meaning of "p" is always expressed by statements on Nss like " N_1 contains p" or " N_1 is P". In these latter statements "N, " is the proper name of, and refers to a Ns; "p" and "q" are statements describing states of affairs in the past, "P" and "Q" denote the property of containing p or q. The distinction between "P" or "Q" and "p" or "q" should be made because that which is contained in a thing is not a property of that thing. "Containing p or q" is a property of N_1 and "being P or Q" is an attribute of N_1. However, as the distinction between properties and attributes of Nss is of no consequence for my argument, I shall avoid needless prolixity by writing from now on " N_1 is p" instead of "N, contains p" or " N_1 is P".

Neither in the philosophy of history nor in the philosophy of language has anyone ever seriously defended the idea that the statements of a narratio have a double function (their first function being to assert "p", where "p" is a statement on a historic state of affairs, and their second function being to assert that "N_1 is p", where " N_1" is the name of the Ns proposed in the narratio that contains, amongst other statements p). This disregard of the narrative idealist meaning of the statements of a narratio may be due to the cogency and a priori plausibility of the narrative realist, or reductionist view. According to this view, language is supposed to be a mirror of reality: so what other kinds of subjects could there possibly be than those that refer to things in (historical) reality? Another probable reason is the contingent fact that historians always use the same words both for their narrative subjects and their Nss, e.g. "Napoleon" or "conservatism". The situation would be different of historians were in the habit of writing "Napoleon" to refer to the historical person bearing this name and *"my* Napoleon" or "the Napoleon of historian H" when they discuss Nss. The fact that both things are usually done at one and the same time (only by saying things on the historical Napoleon or the political opinions of people can a Ns on these topics come into being) has, no doubt, obscured the logical necessity of distinguishing the two functions of statements in ordinary, historiographical discourse. Making the distinction, in accordance with narrative idealism, requires us to postulate a *third* logical entity: i.e. in addition to the two traditional logical entities known from prepositional logic (subject and predicate) a third (the narrative substance) should be recognized.

What then, does the narratio look like when we bear all this in mind? The narratio is a complex structure consisting of different parts. Each narratio has a component devoted to "historical research" (cf. Chapter I, section (1)); furthermore, some space is usually reserved for a discussion with other historians. Often, still other preoccupations guide the historian's writing: he may hope to use the past in order to give recommendations for action now, or, and this happens surprisingly often, he may formulate his opinions on the method to be applied by the student of the topic in question. Purely scientific or theoretical considerations

may enter his narrative — he may explain why a particular scientific theory used for his historical research is better suited to the subject-matter than is another. And certainly every narratio will contain a large number of quite peculiar statements, such as "England went down-hill in the period after the second World War" or "liberal-conservatism was the best answer to the threat of totalitarianism in the first half of the 20th century", whose correct analysis will and can only be given in Chapter VI, section (3). But besides these and other elements not mentioned here, the narratio contains above all a number of statements that a) can be taken to refer — as statements — to past reality and b) when seen narratively, are used by historians to indicate their view of the past to their readers. The kind of historiography with which we are concerned determines whether component a) or component b) comes more to the fore. Component a) will be more conspicuous in a piece of historical research on the price of grain in the years before the French Revolution than in a narratio on how in the same period the idea that the human being is essentially a representative of the human race was gradually replaced by the belief that the human being is a universe in itself.

It may sometimes be hard to establish exactly *what* Ns, that is to say, what interpretation of the past is embodied in component b) of the narratio: it may be impossible to indicate precisely only those statements which constitute the Ns proposed in the narratio. Firstly, even the statements used to constitute a fairly well-known (kind of) Ns (such as "the Renaissance" or "the Enlightenment") hardly ever mention explicitly the proper name of the Ns proposed in the narratio. When Skinner expounds his Ns on Renaissance political thought, he seldom uses such statements as "Renaissance political thought was such and such"; what he does write about is e.g. "the rhetorical defence of liberty", "the concept of *virtus"* or "Humanism and "reason of state"". Yet, although the term "Renaissance political thought" is not often mentioned in statements on these topics, Skinner may be said to have constituted a Ns on Renaissance political thought[8]. Thus, Nss cannot be defined by simply collecting those statements in which the name of the Ns in question occurs.

Secondly, Nss are elusive and nebulous in character. Complete agreement as to what exactly *is* the Ns proposed by a certain historian in his narratio may be hard to attain. If there are many narratios or if there is a long historiographical tradition on a particular topic it is perhaps relatively easy to ascertain what the Nss of the narratios are like. But if only one narratio on a particular topic is available it may be so hard to determine its Ns that we may feel inclined to resort to narrative realism and see the narratio as a "projection" or a narrative copy of its

8. Q. Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought,* Cambridge 1978. One of the central ideas in this book is the unconventional thesis that the modern conception of the state was originally developed by anti-monarchial Calvinist theorists in the 16th century. This honour is usually given to the enemies of this tradition.

subject-matter. Only when we can compare a narratio with other narratios the specific traits of the Nss proposed in them begin to show up (cf. pp. 240 ff.). In this respect the identification of a Ns is like learning a new word; in order to understand the meaning of the word "automobile", it is necessary that we should be shown the similarities and differences between automobiles and other kinds of vehicles. Therefore, narrative idealism and the notion of "narrative substance" become far more plausible when we can compare historiographical topics studied and discussed by generations of historians.

Although it may occasionally be hard to ascertain the exact nature of particular Nss, this is no argument against my proposal to postulate their presence in narratios. An analogy may be helpful: if we do not know the exact distance between the sun and the Andromeda-galaxy it is not due to an unclarity in the notion of "distance". A similar situation obtains here. It need not always be easy to identify the logical constituents of a piece of language (such as "subject", "predicate" or "narrative substance"). Our tendency to cling to a grammatical approach to language even when we practise philosophical logic may mislead us: it is "the grammatical fallacy" that forces us to search for fixed (sets of) words or (parts of) statements that correspond to the distinction made between several logical entities. Consequently, what the exact nature of the Ns proposed in a particular narratio is, is a problem for the historian but not for the philosopher of history. A philosopher may criticize the notion of "distance" but he is not supposed to do the astronomer's work.

I now intend to proceed as follows. I will discuss a number of objections to my proposal to postulate "narrative substances". The numerous complicated problems surrounding the notion of (narrative) subjects have been thoroughly investigated by many philosophers since Frege and Russell. As far as I can see, one's position in the debate on these problems has little or no bearing upon the issue of the Nss that will concern us here: consequently I will not go into these matters in my account.

(2) *First objection.* When Molière ridicules Aristotelian medical science in his *Le Malade Imaginaire* he has the candidate for a medical degree declare:

"Mini a docto Doctore
Domandatur causam et rationem quare
Opium facit dormire
A quoi respondeo
Quia es in eo
Virtus dormitiva
Cuius est natura
Sensus assoupire"[9]

It might be argued that my procedure was essentially the same. I asked what makes narratios what they are, and I answered by producing the

9. Molière (J.B. Poquelin), *Le malade imaginaire,* Paris s.a.; p. 206.

notion of "narrative substances". But unless *independent* evidence for the existence of these Nss is adduced, this remains a suspect, circular explanation of *obscurum per obscurius.* If opium produces sleepiness we must analyze it and show how it acts on the human body. Similarly, one might object, we are not interested in these Nss for their own sake but only in the mechanism at work in the narratio due to which they can play such an important role.

In the remaining part of this book I will attempt to prove that Nss do indeed play an all-important rôle in narrative historiography, so I have no intention of basing my case on the mere postulation of some "virtus narrativa" in order to explain narrative historiography. But there is an assumption underlying this first objection which demands closer scrutiny. This is the assumption that apart from the narratio itself and the Nss proposed in it, there should be a *third* thing or a *third* level that does all the work. Similarly, the effect of certain alkaloids present in opium on the respiratory centre in the *medulla oblongata* is responsible for nearly all the effect produced by opium. It is important to point out that such a suggestion is misleading. The function of Nss in the narratio is not to introduce the reader to some deeper linguistic level where the real "narrative" work is being done. The Ns proposed in a narratio is not a guide or *direction* as to how to read this narratio (so as to reach that ultimate level). Likewise, paintings are not complicated devices invented by the painter to enable us to reconstruct the aesthetic ideas the painter had in mind (and which form the essence of the painting) but, rather, they are the embodiment of these ideas themselves. Here I would like to remind the reader of what was said in Chapter I on psychologism. Being aware of what Ns is proposed in a narratio is tantamount to understanding a narratio as a narratio and not merely a phase preliminary to understanding it.

Therefore, my attempt to explain the function of Nss in narratios must not be interpreted as an attempt to identify the deeper level suggested by the objection under discussion. I am not trying to unearth the hidden and deep-lying arguments that buttress all narrative accounts of the past. When a philosopher of science gives *his* reasons in support of the opinion that certain scientific theories or explanations should be accepted by all rational people, *these* reasons are not, or need not be, part of the arguments used by scientists in order to establish those scientific theories or explanations. Similarly, the arguments adduced here to demonstrate the indispensable function of Nss are not generalizations of a specific kind of hidden argument occurring in actual narratios.

(3) *Second objection.* It might be observed that making the distinction between "narrative substances" and "narrative subjects" — in order to legalize the notion "narrative substance" - amounts to dramatizing an entirely unexciting triviality. This could be argued as follows. Take a physical object O with the properties denoted by the attributes "a_1", "a_2", ... "a_n". We can imagine two sets of statements S_1 and S_2; in S_1 the attributes "a_1", ... "a_i" are predicated of O and in

S_2 the attributes "a_g" ... "a_n" are predicated to O. Likewise — this counter arguments says — we are allowed to speak of the "narrative substance" as embodied in S_1, and the "narrative substance" as embodied in S_2, but that would only be a roundabout way of saying that one set of statements differs from another. What both sets contain and where they differ can be made clear by speaking exclusively of statements. Therefore there is no reason to confer on these sets of statements ("narrative substances") a status over and above the status of individual statements. Whatever can be said in terms of Nss can also be said in terms of individual statements. Thus, to demand for these sets of statements, or "narrative substances" a logical status of their own is to multiply logical entities "praeter necessitatem". If there are two biographies of Napoleon containing different statements on Napoleon's life (supposing both sets to be true) we should express the difference(s) between the two biographies in terms of statements and not as one or more differences in "narrative substances" — if, at least, such "narrative substances", are assumed to be something more than mere conjunctions of statements.

Of course we can see the narratio as a mere conjunction of statements. This is the narrative realist, or reductionist view; but we can equally well prefer the narrative idealist view. Admittedly, it can be pointed out that the notion of the Nss is at variance with the presuppositions of narrative realism, but to show the redundancy of the notion of the Ns, recourse to these presuppositions is inevitable. This may be explained as follows. The narrative idealist can argue that differences in statements are only the *marks* (though very reliable marks) of *another* difference (i.e. in "narrative substances"). In the same way we can say that certain clearly visible marks are evidence that A has scarlet fever, while B is healthy: but that does not permit us to conclude that the difference between A and B as far as their health is concerned consists *only* in external marks. So, if two Nss prove to be unquestionably different with regard to statements, it does not follow that the difference between the two Nss consists *exclusively* in their containing different statements. But, of course this little argument does not prove that the narrative idealist rightly upholds the notion of the Ns, for, like the narrative realist, he bases his case upon his own presuppositions. So this skirmish has to remain undecided: it was only a prelude to the battle of presuppositions involved. Fortunately, we have already fought that battle in Chapter IV and have seen that narrative idealism wins the day. Assuming, then, the truth of narrative idealism, we get the following picture. According to narrative idealism, there are certain rules (to be formulated in Chapters VI to VIII) that govern the narratio. So if we have two different narratios on a particular topic, we not only have two different sets of statements but also differences in the way in which the rules of narrative logic have been applied. It is, in principle, conceivable that there are differences of the latter kind even when differences of the former kind (in statements) are not (yet) manifest.

There is another somewhat more conventional argument against the reductionist objection. As soon as we take the stand that differences between narratios are only differences between sets of individual statements (and the latter are not seen as merely the *marks* of the former differences) it becomes impossible to understand the object of historical discussion. If historian H_1 uses the statements S_1 ... S_n to characterize a certain aspect A of the past and historian H_2 uses the statements S_g ... S_p for a similar purpose, whereas all the statements are true, the reductionist is probably inclined to think that there is in fact no controversy at all between the two historians[10]. When X says that this table is made of wood and Y says that it has four legs, we have no controversy. But to all appearances historians *do* have controversies in such cases; they apparently wish to indicate that S_1 ... S_n is more enlightening for a knowledge of A than S_g ... S_p of vice versa. But *this* involves us in a discussion on the relative merits of each complete set of statements and such a discussion cannot possibly be settled by merely pointing out actual differences in the composition of the two narratios ("H_1's narratio contains S_d"; "but H_2's narratio contains S_o"). For the reductionist, the only differences existing between narratios are differences between the statements that have been used to characterize the past. But those differences are only *indications* of differences in historical judgment and not these differences in historical judgment *themselves.* For if they were what could be the purpose of a discussion? What can be wrong with writing down true statements (let us suppose them to be true)? Therefore, if we were to be satisfied with the reductionist's view , we would, by eliminating the notion of the Nss, at the same time be eliminating the indispensable logical instrument for understanding the sense and purpose of historiographical discussion. If we believe that historical discussions are real discussions and not merely meaningless sham fights on arbitrary selections of true statements on the past, we need the notion of the Ns.

Although philosophical logic should be rigorous in its use of arguments, it must be pliable and pragmatic in its recognition of philosophical problems: it would be narrow-minded to play down or even to ignore philosophical problems because they seem to threaten accepted certainties. To stick unconditionally to the traditional analysis of language with its strong tendency to look at language exclusively from the point of view of statements, is a misplaced sort of rigour. If the actual use of language shows an obviously different picture — as may be the case, when we study history and historical discussion philosophically - we must not simply refuse to accept what it unambiguously suggests: the necessity of postulating a new logical entity enabling us to discuss the philosophical problems caused by the narrative use of language. But, of course, the logical notions urged upon us by the narrative use of language should be

10. E.g. A.I. Melden, Objectivity, a "noble dream"?, in R.H. Nash, *Ideas of history,* New York 1969; pp. 197-8.

examined critically and uncompromisingly.

(4) *Third objection.* It is admitted that sets of statements can constitute a "narrative substance" and that such "narrative substances" are referred to by means of terms such as "Renaissance", "the Cold War" or "the rise of modern capitalism" and so on. Moreover, it is agreed that historians often use such terms and even that the linguistic entities these terms refer to have to be recognized in historio-graphical discourse. But, a critic could continue, there is no fundamental difference between these "narrative substances" and the theoretical concepts we know from the exact sciences. Both kinds of concepts have the task of organizing our experience: theoretical concepts organize our experience of physical reality whereas "narrative substances" do something similar for our experience of historical reality, at least as it has reached us through documentary sources. Let us consider, for instance, the term "the Renaissance"; we should take this term as a kind of shorthand for an admittedly mysterious and elusive complex of things in the past. Similarly, theoretical concepts establish a certain relation between the properties of things in physical reality (for instance, impetus is the product of mass and velocity). Thus, our imaginary critic concludes, "narrative substances" and theoretical concepts are essentially the same. Although I am convinced that every philosopher of history or of science will dismiss our of hand an identification of "narrative substances" with theoretical concepts it may be illuminating to enumerate the differences.

To claim that collections of statements (that is: narrative substances) should have something in common with theoretical concepts is obviously odd: most of the latter (such as, for instance, "angular momentum" or "resistance") are products, quotients etc., of other theoretical concepts. Obviously, narrative substances can never be characterized in this way. Moreover, narrative substances are always related to quite specific historical situations: there is only one period in history we associate with the term "the Renaissance" or with "the Enlightenment". The theoretical and practical value of theoretical concepts, on the other hand, lies in their applicability to an indefinite number of historical situations. In other words, as regards what has been or will be realized in our actual word, theoretical concepts appear to possess a kind of indifference that is entirely absent in the case of narrative substances. In physics, history amounts to no more than the value of one or more variables in a formula and as such it has no effect at all on the structure of the formula and the meaning of the theoretical concept(s) defined by the formula. On the other hand, what could be the meaning of the term "the Renaissance" be if there had not been an actual past like the one which we usually associate with this term? Lastly, in a previous section we found that Nss are things, not concepts.

There is still another problem if one should wish to assimilate narrative substances to theoretical concepts. Nagel discerns three elements in scientific theories: (1) an abstract calculus, (2) a set of correspondence rules which define the relation between the theory and empirical

observations, and (3) an interpretation or model of the calculus (which in some scientific theories may be absent)[11]. That it is well-nigh impossible to indicate the counterparts of these three elements in the narratio, seriously undermines the attempt to assimilate narrative substances to theoretical concepts. But let us say that the narratio as a whole is analogous to the calculus, and that the narrative substances it contains (a narratio may, of course, contain more than one narrative substance) are analogous to the theoretical concepts of the theory. Next we could say that the meanings of the statements of the narratio are a passable analogue of the correspondence rules. However, I don't know what narrative analogue could be found for Nagel's third element. Theoretical terms are always either implicitly or explicitly defined by the abstract calculus (e.g. "F = ma"). But it would be nonsense to say that narrative substances should define each other in the narratio. It would be preposterous to assert that in a history of 18th century political thought the narrative substance on Montesquieu should be defined and could be replaced by a combination of the narrative substances on Locke, Hume or Rousseau, and vice versa.

We will now consider a third and last argument against the view that narrative substances and theoretical concepts should be fundamentally the same. I would like to suggest what I believe to be a very enlightening simile. Narrative substances can be compared to the lenses of a pair of binoculars. Such lenses have been ground with the utmost accuracy so that they give us a view of a landscape as clear and undisturbed by refraction as possible. In the same way, historians continually propose new Nss relating to particular topics in order to achieve an account of the past as clear and consistent as possible. This suggests an important insight into the nature of Nss. The picture or view of a landscape that we can see through binoculars is *either* vague *or* clear; yet in both cases the picture has come into being in accordance with the relevant optical laws. These optical laws are, so to speak, the "projection rules" or "translation rules" (in the sense meant in Chapter IV) which govern the projection of the original landscape into a picture (in most cases) at reading distance from the eyes. If we get an unclear picture we do not blame this on the laws of optics. Neither do we conclude that the landscape itself is unclear, for the landscape itself is neither clear nor unclear. This state of affairs has a notable parallel in the narratio. Like the landscape the past reveals itself to the historian without any reticence down to its most insignificant details (of course, as far as the documents allow); nonetheless, the past itself is neither clear nor unclear in the way this *can* be said of narratios on the past. Obviously, our simile has made us repeat here the narrative idealist thesis according to which the past itself has no narrative pattern or structure. Only pictures of reality, and not reality itself, can be either clear or unclear. If, then, the binoculars show a fuzzy picture of the landscape, no optical law had been defied.

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11. Nagel; Chapter 5, section (II).

This analogy sheds a lot of light on the nature of (narrative) historiography. In the preceding chapter we found that many (speculative) philosophies of history suggest the existence of translation or projection rules enabling the historian to translate the past into its linguistic, historiographical, representation. We saw that socio-scientific theories are the most likely candidates for furnishing these translation rules. If historians describe the past exclusively in terms of such concepts as "national product" or "average income" - as may be the case in modern economic, so-called "Cliometric" historiography - historical reality can be said to be projected onto the linguistic level by means of the translation rules embodied in the relevant socio-scientific theories. The protagonists of these forms of historiography argue that only the application of socio-scientific theories can guarantee "objective", "value-free", "undistorted" representations of the past[12]. In Chapter IV we have seen what narrative realist assumptions lie behind this sort of argument. Furthermore, if we accept Quine's views on ontological commitments[13], we may conclude that the (theoretical) concepts used in socio-scientific representations of the past all refer to "things" in historical *reality.*

But even if the social sciences had realized — in Toulmin's terminology — their "explanatory ideal" and become an entirely reliable instrument for the representation of social and historical reality, they still could not possibly be the *sole* instrument for giving a *clear* picture of the past, science being only an ingredient - and not an indispensable one - of the narratio. In the same way, its having come into existence in conformity with the relevant optical laws is not a sufficient condition for a view of a landscape through binoculars to be clear. To examine the notion of narrative clarity we must take into consideration the Nss proposed in the narratio: the capacity of the binocular lenses to produce a clear view of a landscape is analogous to the capacity of the Nss to render a clear representation of the past. Conformity with optical laws or with socio-scientific translation rules does not automatically produce clarity either in the case of the binoculars or in that of the narratio. The objection might made at this stage that knowledge of optical laws is necessary for the construction of good binoculars: similarly clarity in the narratio can only be attained on the basis of sufficient social-scientific knowledge. My answer to this is that no amount of optical knowledge *alone* can ever be sufficient to know how to construct useful binoculars, for we must also know how the human eye synthesizes an image out of the signals that enter it. Criteria of clarity depend above all on

12. Such claims were frequently made during the fifties and sixties of this century. See, for instance, L. Benson, *Towards the scientific study of history,* Philadelphia 1972. A very uncompromising Dutch appeal to change history into a social science is K. Bertels, *Geschiedenis tussen struktuur en evenement,* Amsterdam 1973. The enthusiasm for the social sciences seems to have subsided somewhat in recent years.
13. See Chapter I, section (4).

characteristics of the human eye. Similarly, criteria of narrative clarity depend on the distinctive characteristics of our narrative grasp of the historical world. Socio-scientific translation rules alone cannot explain the nature of this narrative grasp. In the 17th and 18th centuries scientists succeeded by trial and error in constructing usable optical instruments. Often they did not possess sufficient knowledge of optics to explain why a particular optical instrument turned out to be satisfactory. Such knowledge is indeed superfluous for testing the utility of an optical instrument. Similarly, socio-scientific translation rules do not enable us to explain the origin and nature of criteria for narrative clarity. Only a narrativist philosophy examining the logical characteristics of narrative knowledge (our "narrative eye") can do so. I think we may conclude that knowledge of socio-scientific translation rules is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for an analysis of narrative clarity i.e. of how narrative logic governs our narrative accounts of the past.

All this suggests an important difference between theoretical concepts and Nss. Theoretical concepts do indeed refer to, or denote, certain "things", or aspects of "things" which exist in empirically observable reality even when "no overt procedures for applying those terms to experimentally identifiable instances of the terms" are present[14] ; Nss however, do not refer to identifiable "things", or aspects of them in historical reality. They have a purely "expository" function; they are linguistic devices, auxiliary constructions by means of which historians try to convey a maximally clear and consistent representation of the past. Theoretical concepts correlate *things* with *words* even though those things owe their very "existence" to the words we use to refer to them; Nss function only at the level of words. As we shall see, their sole function is to tie the individual statements of a narratio together. The rules that govern their use cannot be found by analyzing the socio-historical world, but only by investigating the logical structure of the narratio. I think that the analogy with the binoculars shows more forcefully than any of the foregoing arguments the differences between Nss and theoretical concepts. To sum up, all attempts to eliminate the notion of Nss by equating it with the notion of theoretical concepts have to be rejected. Narrative knowledge must be distinguished from scientific knowledge and this distinction runs parallel to that between narrative idealism and narrative realism. The most elementary constituents of narrative knowledge are statements and those of scientific knowledge parts of statements.

With regard to my comparing Nss to the lenses of binoculars, it has to be pointed out where the comparison breaks down. The lenses of a pair of binoculars themselves and the picture seen through them should, of course, be distinguished. This has no analogy in the narratio, for the means employed by a historian to convey a "picture" of the past (for once, I am using this unsatisfactory term), i.e., the Nss which he

14. Nagel; p. 85.

proposes to that effect, *are* his "picture" of the past. On several occasions I have been attacking the view that Nss should give access to something lying "behind" them; in historiography "pictures" of the past and the means by which they are produced are one and the same, i.e. Nss, whereas the comparison of the narratio with a pair of binoculars seems to imply that they are not.

(5) *Fourth objection.* The fourth and last objection to my proposal to recognize Nss in historical narratios is the most telling and it brings us to the heart of the matter. We have seen (cf. p. 100) that Nss are things, not concepts, although, being linguistic things, they are things of a rather peculiar kind. This implies that the concept "narrative substance" is a sortal concept. Sortal concepts are concepts denoting specific categories of things, e.g. books, chairs, dogs and so on. Sortal concepts can only be introduced meaningfully into ordinary or theoretical discourse if they somehow specify how the individual things indicated by them can be identified. For if they were not to do this any number of the properties of the things c_1, c_2, ... indicated by the sortal concept C could be ascribed to each individual c. In that case there would no longer be any individual c's, but only a certain "something" within which all the c's have lost their individuality. At most the c's could be said to have obtained a "negative" individuality: instead of acquiring extra properties (which ordinarily enables us to identify otherwise unidentifiable things) *they* precisely have to lose properties (in order to become identifiable c's). In order to avoid such absurdities it will be requisite for the meaning of a sortal concept to contain a specification of how the individual instances of the things denoted by the sortal concept can be identified. A sortal concept unable to give such specifications has to be regarded as meaningless, or, at least, as essentially incomplete.

According to the fourth objection, the difficulty with the Nss is that the attempt to identify Nss under the sortal concept "narrative substance" is bound to be abortive. And as no other comparable sortal concept has been proposed as yet (nor will it ever be) to denote Nss, there is no reason to believe that there should be such things as Nss. Why, then, is it impossible to identify Nss under the sortal concept that I have proposed? In general we identify things by mentioning one or more so-called "identifying facts" about them. For instance, the individual human being generally known under the name of "Voltaire" can be identified by the identifying fact that this individual human being was the (only) author of the literary work known as the *Essai sur les Moeurs.* As has been stressed by Strawson[15], it is not necessary that both speaker and listener should know the *same* individuating fact; if a speaker thinks (when using the proper name "Voltaire") that Voltaire was the (only) author *of La Raison par Alphabeth,* while the listener does not know *this* fact about Voltaire but knows Voltaire to be the (only) author of the *Essai,* then the particular individual, referred to by the proper name "Voltaire", has

15. Strawson (1); p. 20-1.

nevertheless been successfully introduced into speech.

However, so the present objection runs, in the case of Nss identification by means of identifying facts is impossible because every set of statements that might appear to identify a particular Ns can be part of an infinity of other Nss. The things historian H_1 mentions in order to characterize a certain historical phenomenon can be part of the Ns proposed by historian H_2 on the same or a related topic. The difference here with the identification of, for instance, material things, is telling: mentioning that such a material thing actually was at place p at time t is sufficient to pick it out from all material things existing in this universe from the "Big Bang" to Eternity and to distinguish it from all other things the universe *did* or *might* contain besides it. But we should realize that every time we mention a (set of) statement(s) which, we think, succeeds in distinguishing a particular Ns from all other Nss, a *different* Ns can be conceived of which contains at least this same (set of) statement(s). A very obvious countermove would be this suggestion: could we not identify Nss just by pointing out that a certain Ns is *the* Ns proposed by historian H in his book entitled "x" and published in the year y? Unfortunately, this will not do. Suppose we have the same identification troubles with the instances of the dubious sortal concept "idea". It might be argued, then, that we are racking our brains for nothing, for surely we can say that *this* is the idea A has in mind at t. However, this locution is illegitimate as long as we do not know that the sortal concept "idea" is meaningful - and that is the question that is still *sub judice* here. A solution along these lines is, therefore, only begging the question. Only *if* we know that some sortal concept is legitimate can we identify its individual instances in the way suggested, but as long as we cannot be sure of that, we cannot legitimize the sortal concept by arguing that its instances can be identified in such a manner. Lastly, could we not simply study H's book entitled "x" and published in the year y and *ascertain* what the Ns proposed in it is? Unfortunately this will not do either. We cannot legitimize the sortal concept "idea" by simply saying: "Just look into A's mind. You can ascertain whether a certain idea does or does not exist there. Therefore, it is possible to identify ideas and, thus, the sortal concept "idea" is legitimate". Once more, this would be begging the question. (It should be noted that the topic of this discussion is not the *existence* of certain kinds of things like Nss or ideas, but the meaningfulness of specific sortal concepts.)

Apparently, it can be objected that the sortal concept "narrative substance" does not satisfactorily introduce specific kinds of things into language. It fails to denote a category of individual and mutually different things. If we are feeling kindly disposed, we could at the most give the concept "narrative substance" the credit of likening it to what Strawson has called "feature-universals" or "feature-concepts" and which are ordinarily referred to as "mass-terms". "Snow", "water", "coal" and "gold" are the examples Strawson mentions of these feature-universals or feature-

concepts. Their task is to characterize "general kinds of stuff, not properties of characteristics of particulars; though *being made of snow* or *being made of gold* are characteristics of particulars"[16]. Consequently, these feature-concepts, feature-universals or mass-terms are a kind of forerunner of the more complete sortal concepts. But historians do not content themselves with just turning out something indefinite, to be called "historiography" like the water company supplies water: historians produce specific interpretations of the past. Therefore Strawson's feature-concepts or mass-terms cannot satisfy us here. We really *do* need the more complete sortal concepts. We have seen, however, that the sortal concept "narrative substance" does not yield the kind of individual things a sortal concept is expected to denote. So this sortal concept has to be rejected.

It is perfectly true, as this fourth objection suggests, that we cannot identify Nss by enumerating a number of identifying facts about them. However, that does not leave us entirely empty-handed. For we can - and this is my answer to the fourth objection - identify Nss by a *complete enumeration* of *all* the statements that they contain and this actually is what happens in each intelligible narratio. According to the narrativist interpretation of the narratio, all its relevant statements p, q, r etc. should be read as statements on a Ns ("N_1 is p", N_1 is q", "N_1 is r") and in this way a Ns (N_1) is individuated. Therefore Nss should be seen as a particular kind of thing that can only be identified or recognized as such by a complete enumeration of *all* their properties and that is where they differ from the ordinary things we know from daily life. The objects we become acquainted with in daily life can be identified, i.e. can be introduced into speech as individuals or particulars by means of a few identifying descriptions because only a tiny fraction of what could possibly be said on them is sufficient to distinguish them from all other things in the universe.

Here we face probably one of the most fundamental metaphysical features of our universe. Studying our use of language we should be aware of the fact - for this determines to a high degree our use of language — that we live in a world whose objects are widely different. Very crude means of identification such as space and time are very often sufficient to distinguish individuals. But we can quite easily conceive of universes where this is not the case. I said that the fact that our universe contains things that widely differ from one another is a fundamental *metaphysical* feature of our universe (which, for that matter, strongly influences the logical structure of the language we use to speak about *this* universe). Strictly speaking, however, this is not a speculative truth. We can state this truth with certainty: there is only *one* method of obtaining reliable metaphysical truths about our universe, viz. by comparing our own universe to *other* possible universes that differ from ours in their most fundamental constitution. When we make such

16. Strawson (1); p. 202.

comparisons some metaphysical, albeit non-speculative, truths about our universe are brought to light. For a sound understanding of the nature of Nss it will be helpful if we play this game for a moment.

We can conceive of a world in which even less is required for successful identification than in ours. Imagine for instance, a world consisting of one room that can contain only one object at a time. In such a universe, time would be a sufficient (and necessary) means for identification. It would be superfluous to specify the place of the object. Next, we may imagine a world without change. Here spatial criteria would satisfactorily identify the object; we can even allow a certain amount of change to the things in this world as long as they keep their original place. If we were like trees ourselves such a world would not seem too curious to us. In these two imaginary worlds identification would be even easier than in our own universe - where we can usually identify things in less than no time. I shall now give an example of a universe in which identification is more difficult than it happens to be in our own. This will deepen our insight into the nature of Nss.

Let us imagine that in the next century journeys to an inhabitated planet circling round Sinus will be possible. In spite of our advanced age by then we decide to make the journey to see the extraordinary civilization of the Sirians. Unfortunately, all the Sirians look very much alike to us, and we can't really tell them apart. Leaving our hotel on Sirius we are suddenly accosted by a Sirian whom, apparently, we have met before. But during our stay on Sirius we have already spoken to lots of Sirians and because they all look so very much alike we really can't tell who the Sirian now standing before us is. Since all Earthians have these identification problems, the Sirian government assigns guides to visitors from Earth. Of course these guides have no difficulties in identifying their fellow-citizens. So our guide says: "Don't you remember? This is the Sirian you met at the party of the ambassador of Earth". Suppose furthermore that the Sirians are an extremely sociable people and with a chaotic life-style; one really can meet them anywhere and at any time. Consequently, at the ambassador's party — and on other occasions - we did not meet just *this* Sirian but also a large number of his fellow-citizens. In that case our guide's remark will be of little use to us: we met so many Sirians at the ambassador's party. "Well", our guide continues, "you did not only meet this Sirian at the ambassador's party, but also at the reception of the Sirian minister for Foreign Affairs." However, we met quite a few Sirians on both occasions. So our guide has to call to mind a third occasion (the dinner given by the Commissioner for Interstellar Travel) and so on. The more the Sirians resemble each other and the more of them we meet on each occasion, the longer our guide's list of occasions required for identification will have to be.

I underline the curious character of the process of identification followed here. Identification does not depend upon recognizing the Sirian accosting us in the street as the Sirian who drank a Sirian

Martini at the ambassador's party. All the Sirians are fond of Sirian Martini. Therefore, in the present example there is no simple identifying description that can serve as an anchor to which a long set of other descriptions can be fastened. This is quite unlike the ordinary situation in *our* world: when we give some identifying descriptions (e.g. "the author of Waverley") everybody can mention a number of other facts about the man we apparently have in mind — and identification has taken place. In the Sirian world, it is just the other way round; there it is precisely the list of "other fact" that enables us to identify the Sirians. The list of (commonly) known characteristics of a specific Sirian, to which we get access by means of identifying descriptions, is in the Sirian world the exclusive basis for identification. The visitor to Sirius has to cover Sirius' social reality, i.e. its inhabitants, with a network of the histories of its inhabitants, if he wants to have any chance of success in identifying them. In our world individuals give access to their histories, on Sirius histories give access to individuals.

And this is what identification will always be like in universes consisting of things that very closely resemble each other. Although our own world is not like that — at least not in some important respects — we must be aware of the fact that universes can be conceived of where things are different. Surely, in such universes "historicity" logically precedes "individuality", whereas in our world a particular thing's being an individual thing seems to be a prerequisite for its having a history. But, as we shall see, this is only part of the truth for even our own universe. The fundamental fact is that the universe containing Nss resembles that of the Sirians: the number of Nss that can be constructed around a topic is infinite and they may come extremely close to another. In such a universe, identification differs essentially from what we are accustomed to and it requires nothing less than the complete enumeration of all the descriptions (i.e. statements) that could be given of a certain individual thing in that universe (i.e. the Ns). We shall find that Leibniz's philosophy is admirably suited to deal with universes consisting of such individual things.

The state of affairs I have just sketched can best be represented by the following model. We have to postulate a narrative universe containing all the Nss that are possible on all conceivable historiographical topics. What a historian does when he writes a book or an article is to individuate one (or more, if the subject-matter is more complicated) of those "already-existing" Nss. This fictitious narrativist universe containing all pre-existing Nss is particularly useful to us, because it brings out the fact that no logical difference should be discernable between a) what the historian decided to say on the past when he writes his study and b) what the reader learns about the past when he reads what has been written. When we leave out the fiction of a narrativist universe it may easily be thought that the difference between the historian and his reader should be analogous to that between the contractor who has built a house and the man who is

supposed to live in it. The contractor might just as well have built a different house, whereas the owner looks upon it as something given. Of course reading a book and writing it are different things which require different abilities. But from a logical point of view reading and writing are exactly alike: in both cases a particular Ns is individuated; and this individuation process can take the form of a) writing out this Ns, or of b) reading what has been written out. If this fiction is accepted, we can speak in the remainder of this book simply of narratios and Nss, instead of always distinguishing between writing and reading narratios. In accordance with this suggestion we can state that the descriptions of Nss (e.g. "N_1 is p") entailed by the narratio's statements (e.g. "p"), are *referentially* and not *attributively* used[17]. Lastly, I propose a terminological distinction in accordance with the ideas developed in this section: when something can be designated by means of identifying descriptions we are concerned with the *identification* of things; when something can only be indicated unambiguously by means of a complete enumeration of all its properties (or attributes) - as is the case with Nss - I'll use the term *individuation.*

Thus, we are allowed to say that in the narratio the individuation of Nss and their being created or constructed in the narratio are — from the point of view of philosophical logic — one and the same process. When we are dealing with ordinary things the counterparts of these two processes are entirely different: on the one hand, we find the creation of things in reality - whether they come into being by natural or by artificial means; on the other hand, we have the process of their being successfully identified when they are introduced by their proper names or identifying descriptions into our speech about reality. However, when we are concerned with Nss both these procedures are identical.

We can now formulate a final answer to the fourth objection to the notion of Nss. Anyone who has read a narratio cannot be seriously in doubt — as far as logic is concerned — as to which particular Ns has been introduced into the narratio (in practice, difficulties may arise: I would like to refer to what has been said at the end of section (1) of this Chapter). The narratio provides all the necessary evidence for us to know which Ns has been proposed. When the reader is in doubt we can only recommend that he re-read the text. There is nothing outside the narratio itself that can serve as a clue to the individuation of the particular Ns proposed in it; although extra-textual elements may be helpful in obtaining a correct interpretation, that is: in establishing the exact meaning of (parts of) the text (what could a historian living and writing at a certain time mean when he uses a certain (string of) word(s)? But care should be taken to keep social, psychological or historical considerations out of an analysis of narrative logic. Our tendency to look beyond the narratio itself is, in fact, the source of the mistake inherent in the fourth objection. For the criticism that it should be impossible to

17. Donnellan (2); p. 102 ff.

see how Nss can be introduced successfully into narratios suggests that this problem should be thought of as analogous to the problem of how *ordinary* individual things, existing in extra-linguistic reality, are introduced into speech. Indeed, in the latter case it seems inconceivable that something could be introduced into speech as a particular which has no existence of its own, i.e. independent of the process required for its identification.

However, with regard to Nss we cannot claim the existence of a reality independent of the narratios where they occur, as we may find things like trees and tables in reality: even if we adopt the idea of the narrativist universe as a useful fiction, we should keep in mind that the Nss existing in this universe and the Nss as they are introduced into narratios are in all respects (logically and ontologically) identical. However, proper names and identifying descriptions that serve to introduce into speech things existing in reality do differ (logically and ontologically) from these things themselves. To use a theological term, we can say that the narrativist universe and the linguistic means we have to introduce the objects it contains (i.e. statements on Nss) are "co-essential" in a way normal things and the linguistic instruments used to refer to them can never be. Thus, when we ask how Nss can be introduced as particular into speech we must not think of some "extra" world (like objective reality) containing certain "x'"s, or particular objects, which, when introduced into speech, should yield our Nss. Such a way of thinking would make us, once more, victims of narrative realist illusions. As we know, narrative realism always searches for things outside the narratio and the Nss that correspond to the logical ingredients of the narratio (i.e. its Nss). However, Nss belong to that curious kind of thing which "as a thing" is identical with its linguistic manifestations. The process of its constitution as an individual things is identical with the individuation of its "complete notion", to use a Leibnizian term.

(6) *Accounting for change: narrative substances as subjects of change.* In the preceding section we considered the problem as to whether each Ns possesses an individuality permitting us to introduce the sortal concept of Nss. It is interesting to note that this problem has an exact analogue in the philosophy of historism developed since the days of Herder and Ranke. The difficulty historists had to face could be put, roughly, in the following way: should we attribute to historical entities such as states and nations or cultural traditions an individuality that persists through time and change, or, can we attribute an individuality to such entities only in each particular phase of their development? Whereas we have studied the problem of the individuality of Nss, historists were worried about the individuality of historical entities such as nations or cultural traditions. While in the preceding section we studied the individuality of a specific kind of *linguistic* entity, historism ran into difficulties concerning the individuality of things that were thought to be part of historical *reality.* An exploration of the historist's and the

positivist's view of the individuality of things may shed some light on the function of Nss in narrative language. To be more specific: when investigating the individuality of (historical) things the purpose of our investigation will be to find a definition of the "subject of change" of a thing, i.e. the entity (either logical or non-logical) required to make the description of historical change possible. I cannot go further into this notion of "subject of change" at the present moment, as this discussion in fact concerns the question of how this entity has to be defined. It will in any case be shown that a satisfactory explanation of how change is described requires the postulation of Nss.

Both historism and positivism reject the attitude which the human being is initially inclined to adopt *vis à vis* socio-historical reality, that is, the *essentialist* conviction that all socio-historical objects such as states, nations or institutions possess a persisting essence and that all historical change in these objects is nothing but a modification of these everlasting essences. For instance, in the Middle Ages an essentialist conviction with regard to change prevented people from abandoning the notion of the Roman Empire long after the Roman Empire had ceased to exist. The Frankish Empire and, later on, the Holy Roman Empire were supposed to be the more recent modifications of the same essence already present in the Roman Empire (the medieval adaptation of the doctrine of "translatio Imperii"[18]. The natural law philosophies of the 17th and 18th centuries can be regarded as the last and most versatile and sophisticated version of this essentialism. Natural law philosophy claimed to give insight into the eternal essence of socio-historical objects such as the state, the citizen and the juridical relations that ought to exist and (by the *nature* of these things) in fact *did* exist between these socio-historical objects. Here the "ought" could be deduced from the "is" by assuming an essentialist view of socio-historical reality that did not allow for "essential" change; the essences that have been will always be with us, now and in the future.

In the second half of the 18th century, early historists like Möser and Herder broke with the essentialist conception of historical reality. They were the first to realize (with the possible exception of some 16th century authors)[19] that in the historical process all things are in a

18. See W. Goez, *Translatio Imperii. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Geschichtsdenkens und der politischen Theorien im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit*, Tübingen 1958, p. 62: "die Formel 'imperium transferre' bezog sich in fast allen Fällen, die bisher erwähnt wurden, auf Ereignisse ausserhalb der Geschichte des Römischen Weltreiches. Im Hochmittelalter wurde es dagegen üblich die Translationsprägung auch auf Begebenheiten anzuwenden, die wichtige Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der vierten Weltmonarchie waren: die Verlegung der Residenz von Rom nach Byzanz unter Konstantin dem Grossen, die Begründung des westlichen Kaisertums durch Karl den Grossen und seine Erneuerung durch Otto den Grossen. Vor allem die römische Krönung des Jahres 800 galt als *die* 'Translatio Imperii' schlechthin".

19. That 16th century historiography already showed historist tendencies has been argued by Kelley; the most remarkable oeuvre of La Popelinière lends extra

permanent flux which touches not only the surface, the contingent, modificational aspects of historical reality, but also what essentialists thought to be the essence of socio-historical things. The essences of, and in, historical reality are as much subject to change as that which seems to lie on its surface. However, this deeper insight into historical change put the historists in an unpleasant and ambiguous position. They argued as follows: if everything in history is subject to permanent change, we should, indeed, see everything in the light of its history. To understand the nature or the essence of a socio-historical things such as a state or an institution, requires knowledge of its historical evolution. The nature of a thing is its history. Consequently — and now we are dealing with the most widely accepted interpretation of the term "historism" — historism claimed that knowledge of socio-historical things coincides with a knowledge of their history.

So far, so good. But the historist's argument implies that in each phase of its development a socio-historical thing is different from what it was, or will be during other phases of its evolution. This leads to a conclusion diametrically opposed to the historist thesis that the nature of a socio-historical thing should be embedded in its history. The more we stress the idea that in each of its phases a thing differs from what it is or was in other phases, the less plausible it becomes to consider it as the same individual thing in all its phases. This inconsistency inherent in historism manifested itself from the start because historists tended to emphasize the discrepancies between the different stages in the development of a state, nation or institution. For example, Ranke's well-known *dictum* "jede Epoch ist unmittelbar zu Gott" stressed the unique individual nature of each particular phase in the development of a state, nation or institution.

This means that there are two interpretations of the term "historism", the second more or less arising from the first but nevertheless pointing in a different direction: the first advises the historian to take a dia-chronic, the second a synchronic point of view. As long as the two approaches are formulated in a loose and imprecise way they may overlap each other considerably as to what, according to each of them, the nature of a particular socio-historical thing in a certain phase of its development should be. But as soon as the diachronic and the syn-chronic approaches are followed consistently, their overlapping parts will steadily lose content. In the end this paradox inherent in historism will result in the complete evaporation of the individuality of socio-historical objects.

The historists of the early 19th century, whose historical intuition and sensivity still remains unequalled to this very day, were doubtless aware of the unpleasant dialectics implicit in their conception of historism. Their solution was to attribute an "entelechy" to the socio-historical things they investigated as historians. What attracted them to the idea of

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support to this conjecture. See G. Huppert, *The idea of a perfect history,* s.l. 1971; Chapter 8.

entelechy, or to the "historische Ideenlehre" as they called it themselves, was the suggestion that it is inherent in the essence or "Idee" of socio-historical things to manifest in the course of its development all the properties these things will in fact have. Thus, the entelechy of the seed of an oak is to pass through a number of different phases before it ultimately becomes a tall tree. Likewise the assumption that socio-historical things should also possess such an entelechy or an "Idee" enabled the historists 1) to speak of *one* sole thing developing through time and 2) to allow for very fundamental changes in that thing. Thus, historists might believe that the idea of entelechy or the "historische Ideenlehre" succeeded in reconciling the two divergent interpretations of historism with each other. It will be obvious, moreover, that historists saw the entelechy or "Idee" of socio-historical things as the "subject of change" that logically enables us to describe and to account for historical change: it embodies the unchanging individual nature of socio-historical things.

The entelechy or "historische Idee" may have satisfied the historist as a "subject of change", but it cannot satisfy us. That plants, animals or even human beings (when considered physically) have such an entelechy may be plausible, but that, for instance, nations or such entities as German culture should also possess it is a good deal less obvious. The mistake made by the historists was that they located "subjects of change" in reality itself; admittedly a quite natural but nevertheless, faulty intuition. They believed that Germany or German culture should exist in the way trees, animals or human beings exist, and that an entelechy is present in these socio-historical things themselves, just as it can be said to be present and active in actual trees, animals or human beings. Reality itself was supposed to supply the conditions (i.e., in the idea of entelechy or of the "historische Idee") requisite for the description of historical change. This fallacy arose from the belief that the consistency brought into the historical narratio under the *aegis* of the notion of entelechy or of the "historische Idee" was supposed to mirror a consistency in historical reality itself. Our ability to tell a logical and consistent story about the history of a nation was taken to imply that the nation *itself* had passed through a logical and consistent evolutionary rhythm (which might perhaps even be extrapolated to the future and could thus justify the objectionable political views of some 19th and 20th century historists). But the past itself is neither logical nor illogical, neither consistent nor inconsistent (see section (4)). Only narratios can be logical consistent, clear or unclear. Historism erroneously situated narrative logic, i.e. the logic that governs intelligible accounts of the past, in the past itself. The cogency of the historist's own story of the past was interpreted as if some form of historical necessity reigned in historical reality itself.

Yet, although historists located narrative logic in the wrong place, they did have some valuable insights into its working. If we succeed in cleansing historism thoroughly of all its metaphysical accretions we

shall be left with the most satisfactory philosophy of history we can think of. In fact, profitable use has been made of historist notions such as "Zeitgeist", the "historische Idee" of a nation or a cultural tradition, the so-called "historical forms"[20] — notions that, obviously, all denote Nss. So we have ample proof that historists possessed a profound awareness of how history should be written. They knew that the historian has to construct particular (linguistic) individualities (called Nss in this book) which embody the historian's interpretation of the past. All we have to do is to translate traditional historism from a theory on historical objects into a theory of historical *writing*.

One could say historism is the position half-way between essentialism and positivism. Unlike in essentialism, historists saw in history a process of change which did not leave the essence of socio-historical things untouched; nevertheless, they were not prepared to abandon the notion of the "essence of socio-historical things", because they needed it as their "subject of change". So, after all, historism remained quite close to essentialism; historists had historicized essentialism but not rejected it conclusively. Since the days of Locke's critique of the notion of substance, positivism (to give a very wide interpretation to the term), has considered a thing to be no more and no less than the sum of the properties it has here and now. The historist's assertion that a thing can have properties which are not manifest now, but which in the past were or in the future will be "activated" by the machinery of entelechy inherent in the thing itself, is utter nonsense to the positivist.

Can positivism provide us with a better account of historical change than historism, i.e. can it supply a more convincing "subject of change"? It must be admitted that the positivist's approach to the problem seems more simple, more straightforward, more selfconsistent then the rather vague theories historism has offered us.

The positivist may reason as follows. When an object O changes, a number of the properties of O will remain the same during the change. If that were not the case we could say little else but that O has disappeared or ceased to exist. Before going on with my elaboration of the positivist's account of change, I would like to make a few remarks on the positivist reasoning with regard to the disappearance of object O. I surmise that every example which might be adduced as an instance of an object O ceasing to exist can still be interpreted as a mere change in O. Whether we notice change depends on how we wish to look at reality, viz., on whether we wish to recognize individual (changing) things in reality, and if we choose to see change we shall see it. No conceivable a posteriori argument can ever refute the view that a thing that has changed should be seen as having turned into a different thing and that, consequently, the

20. W. von Humboldt, On the historian's task, in G.G. Iggers and K. von Moltke eds., *The theory and practice of history,* New York; pp. 13 ff. In my opinion the most subtle account of the role of the "historische Ideen" in the writing of history can be found in Huizinga; pp. 134-150.

thing we saw before the change has ceased to exist. However, if we adopt this view things will vanish from our universe, for what (kinds of) things are immune to change? Recognizing things and the justification for saying that one or more things cease or have ceased to exist are inextricably tied up with one another. When would we say that a thing has disappeared or ceased to exist? Take a footprint on the beach that is wiped away by the waves of the sea. In this case we could say that either the footprint has ceased to exist or that the configuration of the grains of sands has merely changed. We can decide both ways. But the former option requires the recognition of footprints as "things".

Incidentally, there is a curious paradox here. Strawson has used the concept "basic particular" to refer to a class of particular things that serve as a basis for the identification of other particular things while the reverse is not the case. Thus the human body is a more "basic particular" than the feelings or thoughts it has[21]. The paradox is that contrary to what we initially would expect, the more basic the particular the more pragmatic the choice or decision between change or ceasing to exist. When felling a tree, no doubt a very basic particular, we can adduce equally good reasons for both options. On the other hand it is well-nigh impossible to doubt that in 1945 the Third Reich — which is not in the least a basic particular - ceased to exist. Only the members of the "Rote Armee Fraktion" might have their doubts about that. Likewise, we may well say that in 1945 Germany changed but not that it ceased to exist, and "Germany" is not a more basic particular than "the Third Reich". Apparently, criteria for deciding between change or ceasing to exist are less well defined for basic particulars than for their more abstract counterparts. At first this may seem astonishing. But our astonishment will vanish when we realize that basic particulars correspond to how we *find* the world (before having made any specific decisions as to what kind of particular things the world contains), while their more abstract counterparts correspond to how we have conceptualized the world (and by then our decisions on how to talk about the world have already been made and we should stick to them).

But let us return to the positivist approach to (historical) change. According to positivists, things only remain identical, or the same individual thing, during change in relation to some concept that in a relevant sense applies to them. This thing is identical with the one in the past because both are books, made of paper and cardboard and so on. Thus Borowski writes: "diachronic identity" is always "identity under some concept" and he continues: "for each concept which is thus that we ordinarily believe the instance of that concept to persist through time, there is a relation which holds between stages of the object at different times (the ability to apply which is part of a speaker's grasp of the concept) which validates the claim that the stages are stages of a single

21. Strawson (1); pp. 38-40.

object of the type"[22]. The close similarity of this proposal to what has become known as the thesis of "the sortal dependency of individuation" is obvious: this thesis has been formulated by Geach in the following way, "when one says "x is identical with y", this, I hold, is an incomplete expression; it is short of "x is the same A as y", where "A" represents some count noun understood from the context of utterance — or else, it is just a vague expression or half-formed thought"[23]. In both cases, whether we talk of "identity through time" or, more generally, of "identity of two things", identity is conceived as identity under some *concept.* It will be obvious, then, that the positivist has no difficulty in defining the "subject of change" when something undergoes change: obviously the concept that "covers" the thing during its different phases is the logical prerequisite for of the description of change.

It might be argued that the concept on its own is too capacious to figure as a plausible "subject of change": the concept, thus conceived, is not only the "subject of change" of *this* specific instance of it but of all its instances. So we should narrow things down a bit. Supposing the concept to be "C", should we not expect the phrase "this C" to be the most likely candidate for a "subject of change"? Unfortunately, this is going too far. Whoever uses the phrase "this C" already knows how to identify this C during its metamorphoses. And what we are at present investigating is what concept will enable us to identify this C during its metamorphoses. Saying that "this C" is the concept we were looking for, the "subject of change", is using *what has to be explained* as an explanation. For what we want to explain is how we can speak of "this C" while this C changes, and, of course, we cannot explain *that* by resorting to the same notion "this C". In other words: the "subject of change" we are looking for must be *part* of the meaning of "this C" but not all of it. What part should it be? After what has just been said, the answer is not hard to find. It must be *that* part of the meaning of "this C" that makes the identification of this C during its changes possible, while not itself being the concept with which this C (i.e. "this C") is actually identified. This offers us the following picture. When a thing is a C a number of attributes that are part of the meaning of C can be ascribed to it. The set of attributes that may serve as a *basis* for the identification of this C during its changes, while not adding up to the concept "this C", can be taken to be the "subject of change" of this C.

Still, this is not the whole story. Things may change so radically that the concept that covered them during a certain span of their lifetime no longer covers them during other periods of their existence. Take, for example, a snowflake that changes into a drop of water. We shall, of course, decide to speak of change here: it would be absurd to say that the snowflake has completely ceased to exist and that a drop of water has appeared from nowhere. It is much more natural, though not

22. Borowski; p. 485.
23. P.T. Geach, *Logic matters,* Oxford 1972; p. 238.

absolutely imperative, to say that the snow has changed into water. Anyway, even if one should doubt this, an account of change that takes care of such changes is a better one than an account that does not. So I think we should consider what "subjects of change" are like when no covering concepts are readily available. It is fairly obvious what course we should take in such cases. In the present example we are faced with two covering concepts ("snow" and "water"), while neither of them covers the thing during its metamorphosis. However, it is not difficult to conceive of a covering concept to facilitate our task, for instance, a concept that is part of the meaning of the original covering concepts, or a concept that has been specially devised for the purpose (maybe by scientists) like "H_2O" in the case of our example. After all, our intuitions with regard to continuity through change must have *some* justification. Let us call this category of concepts C'. Then we can define the positivist's "subject of change" in the following way: when a thing changes, its "subject of change" is a set of attributes (either embodied in a covering concept or in a concept C' or being a part of these concepts) such that these attributes may serve as a *basis* for the identification of this thing during its changes, while not being identical with the concept "this C". For the purpose of the present discussion it is unnecessary to establish what precisely is the difference between 1) the set of attributes mentioned in the definition and 2) the concept "this C". It is sufficient to state that there *is* a difference.

The paramount advantage of the positivist's proposal for the definition of the "subject of change" over the historist's proposal is that it recognizes a set of *attributes* (i.e. something on the linguistic level) as the "subject of change". Positivism rightly claims that what logically permits us to speak of change is not part of the world itself but of the linguistic apparatus we use in speaking about the world. Nonetheless, I think that the historist is right in demanding more of the concept "subject of change" than the positivist's proposal allows for. And it is certainly true that when we make explicit all the implications of the positivist's proposal we find that these are not always in accord with our intuitions about change. An objection against the positivist's proposal is the following. In our universe there is nothing that has no properties in common with any other thing in the universe. This implies that according to the positivist it must, in theory, be possible to see everything in the universe after t_O as "identical through time" with anything in the universe before t_O. Some (set of) attribute(s) can always be thought of that can be truly predicated of the subject in a statement that refers to anything in the universe *before* t_O and of the subject in a statement that refers to anything in the universe *after* t_O. Thus we could say that a cup of tea after t_O is identical through time with a tiger before t_O on account of some properties that tigers and cups of tea have in common (and also *this* tiger and *this* cup of tea). This is, of course, untenable and completely at variance with our customary notion of change. How could we avoid this counterintuitive conclusion that the positivist's proposal seems to

force upon us? Only by resorting, I presume, to certain what we might call criteria of identity which decide what conjunctions of shared attributes are relevant in deciding on the identity through time of one thing with another. Criteria of spatiotemporal continuity are ordinarily the most obvious candidates, of course. When it is said that identity through time is always identity through time "under some covering concept", this can already be taken as an attempt to formulate some such criterion of identity: the covering concept when looked upon as a bundle of attributes implicity states what can and what cannot be regarded as identical through tome with something else. So defining identity through time as identity through time under some specific covering concept(s) is equal to defining one specific type of cases of identity through time as if it were the *general* type. And for this general type the positivist claims that it is not so much the covering concepts but the criteria of identity associated with these covering concepts that determine identity through change. Therefore, the positivist can assert that these criteria of identity logically constitute identity: "because if we don't take the criteria as providing logically necessary and sufficient conditions [for identity (F.A.)] it is not clear how we are to take them" (Griffin)[24].

Is it sensible to say that the identity criteria associated with our conceptual apparatus provide us with the logical basis of our notion "subject of change"? Do these criteria of identity give us the logical entity that makes the description of change possible - or, more precisely, do they define for each instance of change what this logical entity is like? I do not think so. It may be instructive to look back for a moment at the route the positivist has had us follow. Initially our question was: what is the "subject of change" necessary for any description of processes of change? Ultimately our discussion resulted in the suggestion that we should look for criteria of identity, i.e. criteria that permit us to decide whether something remains the same individual thing during change. However, and that is my main criticism of the positivist approach, this search for identity criteria only makes sense when "subjects of change" have already been taken for granted and attention is focused on the more subsidiary question of how precisely change has been, or is to be described. But an inquiry into these criteria of identity has to be carefully distinguished from an inquiry into the logical nature of identity through change and time. Similarly, the criteria for determining someone's moral or juridical guilt do not reveal to us the meaning of the word "guilt". We can conceive of automata or computers that can, in relatively simple cases, establish offences of historists without "knowing" what traffic-offences are: they are only machines. Positivism accepts the language of change as given and only investigates how this language is actually being used. But that is tantamount to accepting as simply given what we want to explain in the present discussion.

It is most illuminating in this context to note the difficulties which

24. Griffin; p. 50.

the positivist's approach leads to. Sometimes it proves to be very hard to determine the criteria of identity associated with a particular covering concept. Personal identity is a good example. Some philosophers propose continuity of memory as the criterion of personal identity, some prefer the spatiotemporal continuity of the human body and still other solutions can be thought of. All these proposals can be challenged by cases where the criterion is useless. Take the memory-criterion. What can we say about personal identity when the brain (in which memory is situated) of one person is transplanted into the skull of another person; or when one hemisphere of the brain is left where it was and only the other half is transplanted (neuro-physiologists have discovered that one hemisphere of the brain can do what two hemispheres ordinarily do together)? Since the days of Locke an impressive amount of ingenuity has been invested in attempts to solve this kind of "puzzle-case". However, I agree with Parfit (and others) when he doubts if these "puzzle-cases" will ever be solved conclusively[25] . When we learn to use a concept — for instance the concept of a person — we learn, at the same time, criteria of identity through time and change for the things denoted by the concept. Consequently, we should never forget that these criteria never reflect more than our *actual* use of the concept. So when we are confronted with the puzzle-cases, which naturally lie *beyond* our actual use of the concept under investigation, we can never expect the concept to conjure up a criterion of identity that will help us in the puzzle-cases. Therefore, the assumption that the puzzle-cases would reveal to us the criteria of identity that are associated with some concept — and it was this assumption that made some philosophers construct the puzzle-cases — is fundamentally unacceptable. Beyond our actual use of concepts there is not some ultimate authority we can appeal to in order to find out what the criteria of identity of the concepts are. Outside language itself these criteria have no anchor that we can discover by putting language to some pretty though tests. Criteria of identity only reveal themselves in the actual use of language. The upshot of these considerations is this. Criteria of identity are not — as the positivist believes — the logically necessary and sufficient conditions for identity through change and time: they only *reflect* or *mirror* the way in which we actually decide in matters of identity through change and time. Consequently, the positivist's criteria of identity cannot answer the question as to what are the logical entities are that enable us to describe change i.e. what the "subject of change" are. The criteria of identity lie, so to speak, on the wrong side of our actual use of language: they *derive* from our recognition of "subject of change" and do not *explain* it.

A metaphysical reformulation of the same point would run as follows: the positivist simply accepts as given that our universe contains certain (types of) things and then investigates how the language we use to describe change reflects this state of affairs. Surely, as soon as there

25. See Parfit; pp. 3-4; Borowski; pp. 494 ff..

are (types of) things there are also things which remain the same thing during change - the criteria of identity associated with the concepts of these (types of) things will see to it that we recognize instances of these (types of) things as the same. But, of course, this reveals to us neither the source nor the justification of the language of change we employ. The positivist only gives a description and not an explanation of the language of change.

Although he wishes to dispense with criteria of identity, a similar criticism can be levelled against Wiggins's most recent account of change. Inspired by Aristotle, Hilary Putnam and Saul Kripke, Wiggins replaces the reliance upon criteria of identity by something which enables us to answer so-called "what is x"-questions (where "x" refers to an individual thing): "the Aristotelian *what is it* question does both less and more then provide what counts as evidence for or against an identity [i.e. what criteria of identity are supposed to do]. It does less because it may not suggest any immediate tests at all. It does more because it provides that which *organizes* the test or evidence, and that which has been wanted by whoever has asked for a criterion of identity in the sense that Frege did"[26]. These "what is x"-questions enable us to decide what sortal predicate applies to a thing and Wiggins answers them in conformity with the relevant ideas of Putnam and Kripke: "x is an f (horse, cypress tree, orange, caddis-fly ...) if and only if, given good examplars of the kind (this, that and the other particular f), the most explanatory and comprehensive true theoretical description of the kind that the examplars exemplify would group x alongside these examplars"[27]. But "what is x"-questions can only be meaningful when what "x" refers to can be separated from its surroundings with sufficient precision. Type-concepts (e.g. sortal predicates) enable us to do this. So we can only answer these questions when type-concepts have previously been given to us (these type-concepts may be more general than that which is expressed by the most accurate description of a thing)[28]. And when type-concepts are accepted as given, identity through change has been accepted as given too, because part of the function of these concepts is to enable us to recognize a thing as the same thing during a process of change. We can discern here the same vicious circle as in the preceding paragraphs.

That leaves us, lastly, with the narrativist proposal for a definition of the notion "subject of change". Narrativism, we found, proposed the concept of "narrative substance" to embody interpretations of the past.

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26. Wiggins; p. 53.
27. Wiggins; pp. 78-80.
28. Ayer also criticized Wiggins's tendency to take type-concepts for granted instead of explaining them: "Wiggins's assumption that the conditions of identity for a persistent object are somehow made available to us in advance of its appearance seems an unwarranted concession to the doctrine of innate ideas". See A.J. Ayer, What is what, *London Review of Books, 22* January-4 February 1981, p. 7.

These interpretations of (parts of) the past are — roughly — interpretations of the history of things in the past. Or — if we prefer to be a little more cautious - in narratios certain terms are introduced (such as "Germany", "Louis XIV", "the Renaissance", "the decline of the Church") to which an extensive set of attributes (such attributes are always statements and not what can be found in the predicational part of the statement) is predicated either explicitly or implicitly. These terms denote, in narrativist terminology, "narrative substances" and it therefore seems natural that narrativism will advocate the candidacy of its "narrative substances" as "subjects of change".

What about Nss as "subjects of change"? Like positivism narrativism avoids the mistake of locating "subjects of change" in (historical) reality itself: unlike historism it does not postulate some mysterious property of things in the past that causes these things to take on in due time the appearances they actually had in the past. But narrativism is even more consistent in its preference for the linguistic level than positivism. As we have just found out, positivism has a strong tendency to accept as given the way we divide our universe into individual things, not regarding it as something that has to be explained from a point of view prior to our actual arrangement of the universe. This tendency may very easily lead us to suppose that the individual things we recognize in reality "are really there", even before our conceptualization of reality. This is, in fact, the essential fallacy in the positivist's argument.

The decisive adventage of the narrativist over the positivist approach lies in the fact that the former does not require that the subject in the statements that add up to a Ns should all refer to the same individual thing. Narrativism does not specify any criteria as to what the subject of the statements contained by a Ns should refer to: and in an ordinary narratio these subjects will always vary greatly from statement to statement. This particular fact enables the narrativist, in contrast to the positivist, to *explain* identity through change and time instead of proposing a theory that merely *reflects* our actual habits with regard to the description of identity through change and time.

It will immediately be obvious that Nss, being sets of statements, satisfy even our most exacting requirement for an acceptable "subject of change". For sets of statements undoubtedly permit us to describe change and they do so without a) presupposing change and b) presupposing identity through change. Even when they actually describe change they do not presuppose change, because they enumerate states of affairs in historical reality without necessarily specifying an inter-connectedness between these states of affairs that is characteristic of change. *If* they express change, this is a capacity quite peculiar to the set of statements in question and which such sets do not necessarily have. Neither do such sets of statements presuppose identity through change and if they actually describe the change through time of one and the same thing, the corresponding statements can always be rewritten as follows: "there is a thing that is p at t_1, "there is a thing that is q at t_2" etc. thus without

implying that the *same* thing should be referred to by the subject-term of all these statements. To sum up, describing change through time is a capacity of specific sets of statements which they do not possess necessarily but contingently and *if* they do possess it we may speak of change. Therefore, change corresponds to a specific capacity of *some* Nss (i.e. sets of statements).

When do sets of statements *have this contingent* capacity of describing the change of a thing through time? In Chapter VI, section (2) we shall see that Nss can be typified intensionally and extensionally. For our present discussion, however, only the intensional typification is relevant. An intensional typification claims the existence of a specific type of Nss which all share a well-defined set of statements. An intensional typification is equivalent to the assertion that reality should contain types of things that are all a_1, a_2, ...a_n. In this way, types of *things* (dogs, chairs etc.) come to be recognized, all having certain properties in common. That such intensional types of Nss can be discerned is a contingent fact concerning *some* Nss, dependent upon what reality happens to be like as well as upon the pragmatical considerations that induce us to recognize certain intensional types of Nss in preference to others. Suppose we have an intensional type of Ns T denoting the class of things t_1, t_2, etc. We may then say that it is a necessary and sufficient condition for a sequence of statements to be a description of the historical change of t_l, t_2, etc. that it should be a Ns of the intensional type T. It is a necessary condition — if a set of statements forming a Ns is not of the intensional type T it cannot describe the change of a t — and a sufficient condition — if a set of statements forming a Ns is a Ns of the intensional type T it describes the historical change of a t. Therefore, the narrativist's proposal that "subjects of change" should be identified with those Nss belonging to intensional types of Nss, presents us with a satisfactory interpretation of the notion "subject of change" which avoids both historist metaphysics and the positivist's circular reasoning. Nss enable us to give a philosophical explanation of the description of change a) without dogmatic recourse to entelechies present in extra-linguistic reality and b) without presupposing change. As far as the latter claim is concerned, circularity has been avoided by acknowledging that a necessary condition for an acceptable account of change is to *explain* the existence of types of things and their sortal concepts instead of *assuming* it. This condition - disregarded by the positivist - is met by taking care that "subjects of change" are not restricted to the (type-)-concepts of types of things (or to the criteria of identity associated with these concepts): in our account *complete* Nss, i.e. not those *parts* of them embodying type-concepts, are typified intensionally. Change cannot be explained without an explanation of how types of things come to be recognized. Nevertheless, the narrativist proposal closely resembles that of the historist: it is nothing but the transposal of the entelechy or "histo-rische Idee" - which according to the historist should inhere in historical reality itself - to the linguistic level of the narrative

representation of the past. The narrativist agrees with the positivist that "subjects of change" are linguistic entities, but they differ with regard to the nature of these entities. The positivist's proposal to that effect accepts as given the fact that the universe is divided into individual things persisting through change and time. The narrativist takes as his point of departure the description of mere sequences of states of affairs in terms of Nss while abstaining from the assumption of the sameness of things. Hence, he is capable of explaining how in some very special cases types of things, persisting through change and time come to be recognized (i.e., when intensional types of Nss can be found).

An important corollary of the foregoing consideration is this. As long as we are dealing with complete Nss while no intensional types are recognized, change remains, so to speak, "locked up" in the Nss. This will be the case with narratios on such non-recurring topics as "the Renaissance" or "the Industrial Revolution". A history of the Renaissance between 1400 and 1550 does not isolate in the past a specific object whose evolution can be followed. Embodied in the Ns on this topic we have a process of change without a "changing thing". Thus there can be "subjects of change" even when no changing things can be recognized in the past itself. This apparent paradox vanishes as soon as we realize that Nss (and "subjects of change") belong to a more fundamental logical category than the concepts referring to types of things, and this is how it ought to be because otherwise "subjects of change" could not explain the possibility of describing the change through time of instances of types of things.

(7) *A fundamental thesis of narrative logic.* We can indicate Nss with the help of the following terms: "Louis XIV$_{h_1,narr}$", "Renaissance h_2", "the emergence of a new social élite in the 19th century h_3", and so on. The indices "… h_1", "… h_2", "… h_3" demonstrate that we are dealing with the Nss constructed by the historian h_1, the historian h_2, and the historian h_3; or, if another gloss is preferable, the Nss constructed in the historical studies h_1, h_2 and h_3. In accordance with what has been said in section (5) I would like to repeat that such an index can never be assumed to individuate particular Nss: the nuisance with Nss, in contrast to ordinary things, is that they can only be individuated by a complete enumeration of their properties. This may seem utterly implausible: surely *this* historical study contains one specific Ns, so how could one fail to individuate this Ns if one says that it is the Ns proposed in *this* historical study? However, suppose we have the labels of a number of bags, each label bearing the name of the owner and the airport-official has forgotten to fasten the duplicates of the labels to the bags. You may be sure that there is one particular bag belonging to each label, but you don't know *which* one. You can only find out about that by calling out the names of the passengers mentioned on the labels and let them pick out their bag. Similarly, the indices "…h_1", "…h_2" and "…h_3" suggest how to set about with the individuation of Nss and to recognize them, but they do

not individuate these Nss themselves. The following analogy may be a further illustration. At an academic party we overhear a conversation between historians and we note that the name "Ranke" is often mentioned. The next day we find ourselves brooding over the question of whoever this Ranke might have been. So we ask our neighbour, who is fond of mystifications, and he answers: "look at p. 1162 of Vol. 18 of the 1973 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica"*. Of course, in contrast to what we find on the page indicated, our neighbour's instruction cannot be said to identify or to be an identifying description of Ranke: being just an instruction to carry out a particular action, his answer does not even have the linguistic form required of an identification or of an identifying description. In the same way the indices "…h_1", "…h_2" and "…h_3" suggest or indicate how to set about the individuation of a particular Ns, without doing the individuating themselves.

In the case of Louis XIV I have added the index "…..,narr" which has been omitted in the other examples of names of Nss. The reason for this asymmetry is that the term "Louis XIV" can denote both a narrative subject and a narrative substance: the term can be the subject in statements on the historical Louis XIV and it can be the embodiment of a historian's interpretation of the French King's life. Of course we must keep these uses of the term "Louis XIV" apart, otherwise it would seem as if there were as many historical Louis XIV's as we have accounts of his life. Furthermore, undoubtedly to the distress of many of his contemporaries, Louis XIV was definitely not a sequence of statements. In the case of "the Renaissance" and "the emergence of a new social élite in the 19th century" the indices "……,narr" have been left out, because these terms very clearly have only a narrative and not a referential use. But if anyone doubts the non-referential character of these terms, he may add the index "…….,narr": in the next chapter I will try to dispel his distrust.

If then, the narratio contains names that should be read as "Louis $XIV_{h_1,narr}$", "the $Renaissance_{h_2,(narr)}$" — or when Nss are constructed in the narratio to which such names could be given — the behaviour of these names in the narratio could be compared to that of the "black holes" in astrophysics. Everything with narrative significance is hungrily absorbed by the meaning of these names. Just like the black holes absorb the matter of this universe and make it into something that in some respects no longer belongs to this universe, so the Nss "eat away" the statements of a sentential universe in order to form a logical entity in another, narrativist, universe. In a way Nss are things but they are things that lead a vicarious life: they parasitize on statements on (historical) reality. However, unlike normal things that have their existence outside language itself, the things named by such terms as "Louis $XIV_{h_1,narr}$" and so on owe their existence only to the narrative text in which they play their rôle. Like the black holes of astrophysics Nss (i.e. not their names) have a peculiar self-referential character: all

the statements they absorb point in their direction, while Nss themselves (not their names!) do not point to anything outside themselves, nor can they be used to express true statements on other things - they are veritable holes in the sheet of language. To pursue this astrophysical metaphor, whereas Nss differ from normal objects whose structure is determined by what *emanates* from them, they resemble black holes in that both owe their form or structure to what is *absorbed* by them. Nss do not lie before us ready for inspection from whatever point of view we like; we cannot come to the heart of a Ns unless we allow ourselves to be captured by it. Whoever sees only part of a Ns, sees, in fact, another Ns.

Nss have their ontological anchor not in things existing apart from them in extra-linguistic reality (as is the case with the components of statements) but exclusively and solely in themselves. The capacity of Nss to absorb the statements of a narratio also accounts for the accumulative character of narrative discourse: the Nss continually gather content in a way quite distinct from deductive or argumentative use of language. The conclusion of a deductive argument usually contains less than its premisses and never more; narrative discourse, on the other hand, moves backwards like a crayfish and adds all the statements it encounters to its previous store by translating them into statements on Nss. As soon as a set of statements becomes so complex that its content cannot be reduced to the sum of the meaning of its individual statements (see Chapter III, section (2)) these remarkable linguistic black holes originate in the text; Nss have come into being and a second kind of logical (narrativist) rule starts to operate. The term "narrative idealism" again brings out in a very suitable way the autonomy of Nss and the fact that the rules they obey are peculiar to them.

A term like "Louis $XIV_{h1,narr}$" refers to a Ns: this Ns consists of statements. These statements can, as we have said before, be looked upon as the properties of a Ns, called "Louis $XIV_{h1,narr}$". These properties behave towards this Ns in all relevant respects as properties ordinarily do towards things. Several Nss can share the same properties and, like normal things Nss, too, are nothing more than the sum of their properties. Nevertheless, the relation of Nss to their properties has a specific logical feature that is peculiar to narrative things, i.e. Nss. Suppose we have a Ns, to be called "$N_{h,narr}$" that contains the statements "p", "q", "r" and so on. We can then say "$N_{h,narr}$ is p", "$N_{h,narr}$ is q", "$N_{h,narr}$ is r" etc. When we are dealing with ordinary things, likes tables, magnetic fields and so on, the statements like "A is p" (where "A" refers to such an ordinary thing) are usually, though not always, contingent truths. It is not necessary for a particular table to have a certain colour or height. It is a-typical of normal statements on states of affairs in (historical) reality for the predicate to be part of the meaning of the subject-term.

But in the case of Nss the situation is different. For statements like "$N_{h,narr}$ is p" "$N_{h,narr}$ is q" or "$N_{h,narr}$ is r" are all analytically true,' since it is impossible that a Ns should have properties different from those

it actually has while remaining the same Ns. Contingent statements cannot be made on Nss: all the attributes that can be predicated to Nss form part of the meaning of the subject-terms of the statements in which these attributes are predicated of the subject-terms. We can express this fact in a Leibnizian way as follows: the "complete notion" of a Ns contains all its predicates in a relation of necessity. In this respect Nss differ essentially from ordinary things; as soon as they lose or acquire a property they cease to be the things they were. In most cases ordinary things are indifferent with regard to some of their properties while Nss immediately adjust themselves to their properties. Just as a word cannot but consist of the letters of which it is formed, a Ns can only contain the statements that it *does* actually contain. The thesis that all statements expressing the properties of Nss are analytical is, perhaps, the most fundamental theorem in narrative logic.

This thesis may require some elaboration. What does it mean that all the properties of a Ns can be derived analytically from its "complete notion"? It suggests, above all, that narrative logic, thanks to its exclusive concern with the relation between statements and Nss, will give no criteria nor even the slightest suggestion as to how factual truth and falsity are to be distinguished. In this respect there is no difference between narrative logic and formal logic. However, narrative logic ventures even farther in this direction than most branches of formal logic. For instance, although a Ns cannot both contain "p" and not contain "p" narrative logic does not forbid that a Ns should contain both "p" and "not-p", In contrast to prepositional logic narrative logic has no difficulty in accepting the truth of both "p" and "non-p" where "p" is a statement on a historical state of affairs. I would like to clarify this probably amazing pronouncement. If a Ns, to be called "N_1" contains "p", the statement "N_1 does not contain p" certainly is in contradiction to this suppostition, but it is not contradicted by the statement "N_1 contains not-p"; for what the latter statement, in its turn, contradicts is the statement "N_1 does not contain not-p" and not the statement " N_1 contains p". N_1 may, as a matter of fact, contain both "p" and "not-p" - narrative logic having no objections to such a Ns. Of course we should avoid such stunts in writing history, but we should be aware that it is formal logic and not narrative logic that forbids us to assert both "p" and "not-p" in one and the same narratio.

The fact that narrative logic studies the relation between statements and Nss suggests yet another item that we may add to our list of differences between historiography and the sciences. The sciences place reality on a cross formed by subject and predicate: they tear reality in two parts and ask which subjects and which predicates belong together. Of course the task of historical research, too, is to yield true statements on the past. But *narrative* historiography knows finer shades of meaning in representing historical reality than just fulfilling the requirement that the right predicate should be tied to the right subject. Narrative historiography must not only answer the question "is the statement

true?" but also the question "should this statement be mentioned in a narratio on S?" The predominance of the latter over the former kind of question has been emphasized by Weingartner. He says that when, for instance, a history of music or of science is written, individual names and facts are only seldom mentioned with the intention of making the reader aware of something that he did not know already; on the contrary, the historian's mentioning of names and facts should be seen rather "as a way of *identifying* the real object of the historian's concern [i.e. a particular thesis on the past]; it [i.e. a particular name or fact] is seldom included for its own sake". In many cases the states of affairs described by the historian "are simply taken as *there,* just as one might describe the features of a landscape without any reference to the forces that are responsible for its existence" (where the inquiry into these forces does correspond to the non-narrative, scientific approach to reality)[29]. You could say that from the narrativist point of view the facts mentioned in a narratio should be seen as mere "illustrations" (of some historiographical thesis); the statements describing these facts function as mere contributions to a particular view of the past (without ever being this view itself) as embodied in certain Nss. When isolated from the narratio their value is negligible. Facts and statements are, indeed, instrumental in suggesting a particular interpretation of the past, but they should always be separated from these interpretations themselves.

This enables us to understand why such books as Trevor-Roper's *The Rise of Christian Europe* or Cobban's *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* are often so interesting and stimulating for historians. The facts mentioned in these books have nearly all been known to historians since their undergraduate years, but the "illustrative" use that has been made of these so very well-known facts is so out of the ordinary that new and fruitful visions of the past become possible. The same, for that matter, can be said of much of our daily conversation in which the number of new facts we impart to each other is usually very small. As much as ninety per cent of social intercourse may consist of endless variations of what speaker and listener have known for a long time. But that does not mean that ninety per cent of social intercourse should be superfluous. Conversational variations on well-known facts put these facts to new "illustrative" uses, and that is what makes it worthwhile to participate in social intercourse. Very often facts are mentioned not in order to convey relevant information but in order to create a point of view from which we are invited to see reality.

29. Weingartner; p. 46.

CHAPTER VI
THE NATURE OF NARRATIVE SUBSTANCES

In the preceding chapter the concept "narrative substance" was introduced and an attempt was made to demonstrate both the consistency and the utility of this "new" logical entity. We learned that Nss differ most conspicuously from the things that our universe *does* or *might* contain in that the former, in contrast to the latter require for their individuation a complete enumeration of all their properties. I emphasize that even if we allow for "possible worlds" in a currently accepted sense (e.g. Kripke)[1], identification in these other possible worlds would be similar to what it is in our own and thus be different from the individuation of the Nss contained *in* the narrativist universe (for the notion of the "narrativist universe" I refer to p. 118 ff.). So the particular character of individuation in the narrativist universe does not vanish even if we compare this universe to the sum of all possible worlds. Thus the difficulties in the individuation of Nss cannot be explained away by asserting that they arise from suggesting an improper and misleading parallel between a) all *possible* Nss and b) *actually* existing things in our universe.

As we have seen it is necessary for the individuation of Nss to read the relevant statements of a narratio, p, q, r, etc. as "N_1 is p", "N_1 is q", "N_1 is r" etc.. From the narrativist point of view these relevant statements of the narratio *are statements on Nss.* In the first section of this Chapter I will discuss the nature of these statements on Nss that embody the narrative meaning of the narratio. In the other sections the logical character of Nss themselves will be scrutinized.

(1) *Leibniz and narrativist philosophy.* Many historians have emphasized the significance of Leibniz as a precursor of historism (e.g. Meinecke, Cassirer and Reill)[2]. In this section I shall demonstrate the

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1. See Kripke; p. 267: "a possible world isn't a distant country that we are coming across, or viewing through a telescope. (...) A possible world is *given by the descriptive conditions we associate with it.* (...) 'Possible worlds' are *stipulated,* not *discovered* by powerful telescopes".
2. Cf. Meinecke (p. 30): "in ihr [i.e. Leibniz's concept of the monad] steckte ein epochemachender und entwiklungsfähiger, über alles naturrechtliche Denken hmausführender Keim, der später im Historismus aufgehen sollte: die Idee der eigenartigen, spontan nach eigenem Gesetze wirkenden und sich entwickelnden Individualität, die noch dabei die Abwandlung einer universalen Gesetzlichkeit ist". Cassirer writes (p. 229): "Leibniz bases the nature of the monad on its identity but he includes in this identity the idea of continuity. Identity and continuity combined are the basis of the totality of the monad, and they constitute its completeness and characteristic wholeness. This fundamental conception of Leibniz's metaphysics signified a new and promising step toward the understanding and conquest of the historical world". See also Reill; pp. 38-39.

resemblance between Leibniz's logic and the historist philosophy of history defended in this book. First of all, an insight into the nature of the statements on Nss can be gained more easily when it is recognized that Leibniz's theory of the proposition is admirably suited to describing them. Leibniz's central thesis is the so-called "predicate in notion principle" ("my greatest principle" as Leibniz himself professed), which is the idea that in true propositions the predicate is always included in the notion ("complete notion") of the subject of the proposition. In the case of logical or mathematical propositions ("vérités de raison"), which are often said to be tautologies, this seems a tenable way of speaking. But as soon as we think of statements expressing a state of affairs in our world ("vérités de fait"), Leibniz's greatest principle appears a good deal less plausible. Thus Arnauld objected in a letter to Leibniz that one can or cannot make a journey to Paris without ceasing to be the person one is. Consequently, the predicate "... has made is making will make a journey to Paris" cannot be part of the meaning of the subject-term in propositions on a person[3]. Leibniz admitted that this was a difficulty and that is why he had actually proposed the distinction between "vérités de raison" and "vérités de fait". However, Leibniz argued as follows. God has chosen to realize the best of all possible worlds; moreover He possessed the immense amount of knowledge required for achieving this ideal. Therefore He could "figure out", as it were, exactly what each individual being had to be, up to the most insignificant detail (as, for instance, the making or not making of journeys to Paris), if the best of all worlds was to be realized. Consequently, if a person has at his disposal the same infinite knowledge as God possesses and is also aware of the fact that God has created the best of all possible worlds, he can "rethink" God's thought-processes and thus establish that it is part of the "complete notion" of the concept "Arnauld" that he will or will not make a journey to Paris. So in the end even "vérités de fait" are analytical truths in which the predicate is part of the meaning or of the "complete notion" of the subject-term.

We can safely disregard Leibniz's theological speculations and still maintain that his theory of the proposition is a fundamental theorem on statements that have Nss as their subjects. Let us first come to an agreement regarding notations: "N ("N" refers to a specific Ns) is not p" will be equivalent to "N does not contain p"; whereas "N is (not-p)" will be equivalent to "N contains not-p". It will be noted that statements like "N is not p" (and not statements like "N is (not-p)") are the analogues of statements on "ordinary" things, like "a is not ø*":* in both cases it is asserted that a certain thing does not possess a certain property and not that it does possess a "negative" property (like "not-p" or "not-∅"). With regard to the "ordinary" things that fill our universe it is (mostly) true that both "x is ∅" and "x is not ∅" are compatible with x being the thing it is. If, for instance, we reject Leibniz's theological speculations, we may agree with Arnauld that Arnauld's

3. See for Leibniz's discussion of this objection: Leibniz (2); pp. 334 ff..

identity is not at stake when one considers whether he does or does not make his journey to Paris. The things in our universe may change drastically without ceasing to be the things they are. However, the situation Leibniz apparently had in mind really *does* obtain when we are dealing with Nss. For if we have a Ns "N_1 " the complete notion of N_1 either does contain p or does not contain p. So the identity of Nss *is* at stake with every statement that is made on its properties. The reason for this is, to put it in Leibnizian terms, that in the case of a Ns all its properties are included in the notion of the subject-term and can be analytically derived from it. We may conclude, therefore, that out of two contradictory statements on a particular Ns, one always has to be true, while the other is self-contradictory.

From this Leibnizian rule on statements on Nss, a thesis can be derived which I propose to call "the thesis of the harmonious constitution of the narrativist univers". But before elaborating this thesis I must make some comment on negative statements on Nss, e.g. "N is not q" (1). Statement (1) can be read as either "it is not the case that N is q" (2) or as "it is the case that N is not q" (3). It will be obvious that in both (2) and (3) the subject-term of the statement refers to a Ns not containing q; otherwise, these statements are self-contradictory. The situation is somewhat more complicated when statement (1) is read as a meta-statement. It may then express either the falsity of the statement "N is q" (4) or the truth of the statement "N is not q" (5). In contrast to (2) and (3), statements (4) and (5) have different subjects. The subject-term of (4) refers to a Ns containing q, while the subject-term of (5) refers to a subject-term *not* containing q. It will be observed that (4) is self-contradictory because it negates an analytical truth, whereas (5) affirms an analytical truth. This is why interpretation (4) of statement (1), in contrast to interpretation (5), has to be rejected. We must conclude that each permissible interpretation of statement (1) is a statement in which the subject-term refers to a Ns not containing q.

Consider now the following three statements on Nss: "N is p" (6), "N is q" (7) and "N is not q" (1). Bearing in mind what has been said in the preceding paragraph and that a Ns is either q or not q, we may claim that either statement (6) and statement (7) or statement (6) and statement (1) belong together as statements on the same subject. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, that it is impossible to contrive mutually incompatible statements on the things contained in the narrativist universe: each pair of statements that *seem* to be so, describe different Nss and are, therefore, completely compatible. If we were to try to force the issue with the statements "N_1 is q" and "N_1 is not q", we would be faced with one self-contradictory statement and a statement that is analytically true. But such statements can no longer be said to be incompatible, because one of the two statements can never be true, whereas, as we saw in Chapter III section (4), for two statements to be incompatible it is a necessary condition that both *could* be true (or untrue). Because all the meaningful statements that can possibly be made on the

things in the narrativist universe are compatible and in perfect harmony with one another, we can with good reason speak of "the harmonious constitution of the narrativist universe". Harmony reigns supreme in this universe.

The other conclusion in this. A certain looseness is permissible when we speak of the ordinary things in our universe; this looseness is an essential condition for the sciences to function and is absent when Nss are discussed. Saying that 1) a piece of paper burns is *a priori* compatible with *both* the statements; 2) the paper is being oxidized and 3) the paper is not being oxidized. Thanks to this *a priori* compatibility science can make its discoveries and establish *a posteriori* which two statements out of the three belong together. Thus, the sciences are in fact made possible by the "disconnectedness" of statements like 1) on the one hand, and statements like 2) and 3) on the other. However, as we have seen, this "disconnectedness" no longer exists in the narrativist universe. We have the certainty that either "N is p" and "N is q", or "N is p" and "N is not q" belong together as statements on the same Ns. But no scientific discoveries *a posteriori* can be made here, because the complete notion of N decides *a priori* which of the two possibilities is the case. Consequently, as long as historical and social reality are described in terms of Nss - and it seems to me fairly sure that even the social sciences are heavily infected with Nss (cf. concepts like "power", "class", "capitalist society" or "social structure") - scientific discoveries as we find them in the exact sciences can never be expected. I do not hesitate to admit that when such terms are used it may often *seem* that some "regularities" obtaining in social reality can be "observed" or "discovered". But we should never forget what the nature and the source of such regularities are: they are not regularities that can be found in the past or in social reality itself, but only in Nss (e.g. all N_1 have in common the properties $p_a \ldots p_n$)- It could be argued that similarities in actual reality must necessarily correspond to similarities in Nss. But we shall find in the next section that similarities between Nss indicate either that a specific topic (e.g. "the industrialization of Germany", "the scramble for Africa") is discussed in several narratios, or that the histories of certain *kinds* of things (e.g. convents, cities) are described, whereas in both cases no relevant regularities can be claimed for the properties of these topics or things. In short, similarity between Nss corresponds to a similarity of subjects, but not of properties of subjects beyond *those* properties that make them the same subjects — and the latter is what science is so much interested in. Or, similarities between Nss reflect only similarities in our narrativization of the world in terms of complete statements, but no scientifically, a posteriori, discoverable similarities between things in the world. And this remains true as long as the *general* knowledge resulting from research in the social sciences is expressed in terms of Nss. Regularities "discovered" when socio-his-torical reality is described in terms of Nss are always truths *de dicto* and not *de re*. Although these truths at first sight *seem* to be a posteriori truths, they always *are* necessary truths. This is the

narrativist analogue of Leibniz's idea that every truth has a proof a priori drawn from the notion of its terms.

If, then, the statements on Nss are all compatible, we might also ask whether Nss themselves can never be incompatible. It will immediately be obvious that only the narrative reductionist can speak of incompatible Nss: according to him the statement "N_1 is p" is incompatible with the statement "N_2 is (not-p)", because p and not-p are incompatible. As a consequence, N_1 and N_2 can be said to be incompatible Nss. But when the narrativist point of view is preferred we are not allowed to speak of an incompatibility in such a situation: as we saw in the preceding chapter, we can even conceive of Ns N_1 which is "narratively" perfectly in order, while both statements "N_1 is p" and "N_1 is (not-p)" are true. Thus, the narrativist can never speak of an incompatibility of Nss. And that is what we might have expected already, because from the narrativist point of view Nss are a kind of thing and things are never incompatible with one another: we have no "negative" things. This adds of course yet another dimension to our thesis of the harmonious constitution of the narrativist universe.

It must be emphasized that this thesis does not imply that in historiography we would not be able to give reasons as to why one analysis of the past is preferable to another. But this is a problem that belongs to what one might call the realm of narrative pragmatics (i.e. the application of the rules of narrative logic) and not to narrative logic itself. Although it will be pointed out in Chapters VII and VIII, where narrative pragmatics is studied, that at least a number of the reasons for our historiographical preferences are closely tied up with the logical issues considered in Chapter VI and in the present chapter, narrative logic itself should not be confused with the problems its application gives rise to. For the logical characteristics of the narratio being studied here are to be found in *every* intelligible sample of narrative historiography, and precisely for that reason these characteristics cannot show us how to distinguish between good and bad historiography (i.e. the problem of the best application of the narrativist rules).

Does the narrativist universe leave room for ambiguities: will it be possible to identify and describe unambiguously and with precision each object in this universe? We cannot but be certain that this is the case: if something (that is: a statement) can be a property of a Ns, it is also, so to speak, a "dimension" of the narrativist universe. Thus, by ascertaining what its dimensions are, we can individuate and describe with absolute precision any given object in the narrativist universe in such a way that it can be distinguished from every other object in this universe. Yet, one may ask, are there no "holes" in the narrativist universe which owe their existence to possible states of affairs that have not "materialized" in our actual world? This question can be answered by stipulating a narrativist universe corresponding to each possible world.

Even then, two peculiarities remain. The dimensions of the narrativist universe differ fundamentally from e.g. the four dimensions

of the spatio-temporal continuum. These four dimensions are each a kind of scale, and each point in the spatiotemporal world can be identified unambiguously by enumerating four numbers corresponding to certain places on the scales. The dimensions of the narrativist universe cannot serve as such scales for obvious reasons; an object does or does not have a certain dimension - "tertium non datur". So the narrativist universe seems to be a peculiarly "flat" thing: i.e. an infinitely long list of statements that can be made on historical reality and each object is individuated by pointing out which statements it contains. Within such a "linear" narrativist universe we can give no significance to the assertion that by the dimensions of the narrativist universe certain *objects* (i.e. points in the narrativist universe) are individuated. So we ought to reorganize the "linear" model. We should visualize the narrativist universe as a coordinate system with as many axes (dimensions) as possible statements on (historical) reality. I shall not enter into a discussion of the nature of these statements; we should simply think of the kind of singular constative statements occurring in normal narrative historiography. On each axis we find only the values 0 and 1; we give a Ns the value 1 on a certain axis if it does contain the statement that corresponds to the axis and the value 0 if it does not contain this statement or some equivalent. If this visualization of the narrativist universe is accepted, we can effectively maintain that this multi-dimensional universe consists of identifiable "points", each of which *is* a certain Ns (i.e. not merely a "portrayal" of these Nss themselves). Only sets of numbers 0 and 1, indicating the coordinates of Nss, could be said to embody such "portrayals". But there is a second, more embarrassing difficulty with the narrativist universe. Each set of statements on our world can be expanded ad libitum; consequently, a narrativist universe has no fixed number of dimensions (because history is a finite affair, we need not speak of the infinity of dimensions of the narrativist universe). This unfortunately implies that the narrativist universe has no concept analogous to that of "distance" in the spatiotemporal continuum. Therefore, what *exactly* the difference is between two Nss cannot be indicated, for instance, by tracing what set of Nss lies between them (of course, for the narrative reductionist the problem of the difference between two Nss is solved in no time, viz. by simply pointing out the differences between two *sets* of statements). I am afraid it will be impossible to find an acceptable remedy for this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

A note of warning about two traps is due here. First, it might be argued that in order to know the distance between two points in the spatiotemporal continuum we do not need to be able to enumerate in some way or another all the points with their exact coordinates on the line connecting the two points. *What* precisely lies between two points is irrelevant to the question of the distance between them. Thus it might also appear that if we know where two Nss are in the narrativist universe we can establish the "distance" between them. However, this analogy is misleading. The concept of such a line only makes sense if this line runs

through the same space as the one defined by the dimensions by means of which the two points connected by the line can be localized. And because the number of dimensions of the narrativist universe can be increased at will, this condition is impossible to satisfy. Secondly, the fact that we can never tell *precisely* what the difference or distance between two Nss is does not imply that we should abandon the whole notion of "difference(s) between two Nss". Just for the very reason that the set of dimensions in the narrativist universe is expandable at will, can we be sure that there is a narrativist "space" that separates even two Nss that are alike except for only one statement.

But, once more, precision cannot be attained here. Probably, the foregoing argument can be said to explain the lack of precision in historical discussion that has been regretted by so many historians and philosophers of history alike. Nss do not all share a common background (i.e. set of shared dimensions) in terms of which their differences can be stated with absolute accuracy.

Finally, we may be relieved to find that our inability to ascertain exactly the difference(s) or distance(s) between Nss does not affect our ability to locate with precision Nss in the narrativist universe. Adding x dimensions to a p-dimensional space does not change the position of the points whose position can be fixed by means of the dimensions 1 to p. The position of a Ns in the narrativist universe can thus be fixed once and for all by means of those dimensions for which the Ns yields the value 1; if this were not the case, the whole "narrativist building" we have erected would collapse.

In this section an attempt is made to assimilate Leibniz's prepositional theory to narrative philosophy. I am very much aware of the fact that despite striking resemblances a number of disparities do remain. It stands to reason that one should be very reluctant to propose emendations in the oeuvre of so eminent a philosopher as Leibniz; the more so as Leibniz's philosophy was meant to serve purposes quite different from that which is under discussion in this study. Yet I am convinced that some of the difficulties given rise to by Leibniz's logic could be solved if it is interpreted from a narrativist point of view. This may be illustrated by an anomaly in Leibniz's position that has already been hinted at by Russell[4]. Essential to Leibniz's philosophical position are two principles: 1) all monads contain their life-program from creation, 2) there is a so-called "pre-established harmony" between all the life-programs of all the monads so that what happens outside a particular monad A - for instance, in some other monad B — is correctly perceived at the right time by monad A. However, on Leibniz's terms it is not in the least clear why this pre-established harmony should be requisite nor what this concept could mean in a universe that is structured in conformity with Leibniz's ontology. Suppose that one and the same event should occur in your monadic life-program at t_1 and in mine at t_2; what could be wrong with

4. Russell; pp. 129-130.

that? There could only be something wrong if we *both* had at our disposal the *same* objective time-scale with regard to which we could establish whether t_1 and t_2 were the same objective points of time or not. And, of course, if there were to be such an objective time-scale and t_1 and t_2 could be different according to a metaphysical description of the world, such a description would have little to recommend it. I think this is what induced Leibniz to postulate his doctrine of the pre-established harmony.

However, the whole drift of Leibniz's speculations is precisely to eliminate the very idea of such an objective, inter- or extramonadic time scale. So Leibniz's dilemma is this. On the one hand he might adhere to a completely monadistic universe; and in that case all the monads have their own (picture of a) universe in themselves — inconsistencies between the life-programmes can not occur for the simple reason that they cannot be perceived and are even inconceivable. For what language could express such inconsistencies? Here the monads are truly "without windows", as Leibniz liked to say. I "live" my universe and you "live" yours. On the other hand, Leibniz might choose to stick to his pre-established harmony, but in that case the consistency between the life-programmes of the monads could not possibly be expressed in purely "monadic-bound" language, for there is no common ground between the perceptions of the perceptions of the monads. In order to speak meaningfully of this pre-established harmony, we shall have to rely on a more *fundamental* language than just monadic language: in this case, spatiotemporal language. And that will be tantamount to relinquishing monadic metaphysics. Thus, Leibniz has to choose between either abandoning his doctrine of pre-established harmony as irrelevant (but that would leave him with a very implausible account of our world) or a defence of this doctrine (but for this defence he will ultimately have to fall back on spatiotemporal language).

This Leibnizian dilemma will not face us when we are dealing with narrativist universes (in which Nss play a role analogous to that of Leibniz's monads). For according to the thesis of the harmonious constitution of the narrativist universe, no incompatible statements can be made on the things contained in such a universe and we may, therefore, rightly claim for the narrativist universe the "pre-established harmony" which Leibniz claimed for his. And for an explanation of this "pre-established harmony" we will not have to rely on non-narra-tivist, e.g. spatiotemporal language. Because Leibniz was not radical enough in his ontology he created for himself the dilemma sketched above. His idea of the monads and their life-programmes is evidence of his wish to conceptualize (or, to use a term characteristic of our approach: to narrativize) reality completely. However, his hesitating to eliminate entirely the special position of spatiotemporal notions in his ontology caused him to stop prematurely. Narrative philosophy is more consistent in this respect: of course it does not reject spatiotemporal determinations but it takes away their privileged status. In narrativist philosophy,

spatiotemporal predicates have exactly the same status as less conspicuous ones: only statements and not parts of statements (expressing e.g. spatiotemporal determinations) are the dimensions of the narrativist world. This also demonstrates that the difference between the so-called "cross-sectional" historical studies and those that describe the historical evolution through time of a particular historical entity is of no consequence for narrativist philosophy (see Chapter I, section (1)). The dilemma structure-process no longer presents itself in the narrativist approach to historiography.

A more traditional problem in the literature on Leibniz concerns the correct interpretation of Leibniz's Law of the Identity of Indiscernibles. This law states that there cannot be *two* individuals which are exactly alike in all that can be qualitatively predicated of them; or as the law is often formulated "eadem sunt quorum unum in alterius locum substitui potest, salva veritate"[5]. Whether the law does actually follow from the predicate in notion principle, as Leibniz himself was sometimes inclined to believe[6], is a question I will not go into in this discussion. In recent literature there has been much controversy as to the exact meaning of Leibniz's law. Was it Leibniz's intention to say that the very idea of two identical substances is self-contradictory, or was it his purpose to claim that it is a factual truth that no two identical substances can be found?[7] Or, to mention a third possibility, was Leibniz only attempting to *define* "identity" by means of his law?[8]

Anyway, whatever interpretation we give to Leibniz's law it will yield no acceptable results. This can be argued as follows. We can write the law in the subjointed manner:

$$(Vx)(Vy)[x = y \equiv (V\varnothing)(\varnothing(x) \equiv \varnothing\ (y))]$$

or, to express it in "prose": x and y are identical if and only if they are identical under each description that can be given of them. However, when x and/or y are described in terms of non-extensional predicates Leibniz's law can be falsified. Thus the number "9" can be described as a) the number of the planets (extensionally) and b) the number necessarily lying between 8 and 10 (intensionally). According to Leibniz's law the number under description a) should be identical with the number "9" under description b), but that is not the case because the number of the planets does not necessarily lie between 8 and 10. Another hackneyed example that clashes with Leibniz's law is furnished by the Needle of Cleopatra in New York's Central Park. Suppose erosion were to necessitate the continual replacement of old granite by new. We would not hesitate to say that it was still Cleopatra's Needle we saw in

5. Rescher (1); p. 48. See also theorem (9) of *The Monadology:* Leibniz (2); p. 643.
6. Parkinson; p. 131.
7. Parkinson; p. 130.
8. M. Dummett, *Frege,* London 1973; pp. 534-4.

Central Park. And, of course, personal identity is an even more telling example. Although provisory solutions to the problems entailed in these counter-examples of Leibniz's law can be conceived of, it appears that such solutions always give rise to new difficulties. Therefore, Griffin concludes "it may seem puzzling that the absolute theory [i.e. Leibniz's law] ever commanded any respect at all, let alone the all but universal assent that has, in fact, been accorded to it"[9].

Leibniz's law is, however, quite unexceptionable when it is applied exclusively to a narrativist universe. In a narrativist universe Nss can only be described in terms of the statements contained in the Nss (cf. pp. 136 ff.). Nss have just been circumscribed as points in a narrativist universe. No description of these points makes sense unless it is formulated in statements that may or may not be contained in Nss. Thus the statements Nss contain are the only properties that they can meaningfully be said to possess. Within such a context, disparities between extensional and intensional descriptions of a thing cannot arise. Here we can simply say that two Nss are identical if and only if all their properties (i.e. the statements they contain) are alike. Therefore, when Leibniz's law is applied to Nss, it cannot be falsified by ambiguities. And that which was absurd in our example of the number "9" can even be accepted here as a universal truth, viz. the thesis that when a and b are both identifying descriptions of the same thing it is a *necessary* truth that both a and b refer to the same thing. Here is an interesting parallel between the objects in a mathematical universe and those in the narrativist universe: referential opacity is entirely absent for all the purely mathematical or narrativist descriptions that can be given of each object in either of these universe. "Les extrêmes se touchent".

The source of this difficulty and others lies in the fact that Leibniz did not always distinguish clearly between things and their properties on the one hand, and subjects and predicates on the other. Leibniz's tendency — typical of rationalism — to get these matters confused has been noted by several of his modern commentators. This may be illustrated by an inconsistency in Leibniz's system pointed out by Strawson. According to Leibniz's monadic system the identity of monads or substances depends on the "point of view" from which the universe is perceived by them. Together with Strawson, we might ask Leibniz why there should be only one monad or substance for each point of view. Leibniz's apparent inability to counter this objection effectively is, of course, fatal to his doctrine of the identity of indiscernibles[10] . Leibniz could only have saved his position, Strawson writes, if he had identified monads with their complete notions (subjects). In that case monads or substances can be individuated unambiguously with the help of the general concepts mentioned in the predicates by means of which the life histories of the

9. Griffin; pp. 8-9. In a most ingenious way Wiggins recently attempted to save Leibniz's law: see Wiggins (2), esp. Chapter I.
10. Strawson (1); pp. 124 ff..

monads or substances are described. Of course, Strawson's suggestion is essentially the same as the interpretation of Leibniz advocated at the beginning of this section. The only difference is that in Strawson's emendation of Leibniz's monadism, individuation takes place with the help of general concepts, while in narrativist philosophy monads or substances (i.e. Nss) are individuated by means of statements. It should be added, by the way, that other commentators of Leibniz have proposed interpretations of Leibniz that are very similar to Strawson's[11].

Two other elements of Leibniz's monadism can be transposed without essential corrections to the domain of narrativist philosophy. Firstly, in both Leibnizian and narrative logic the subject of a statement is in a much more prominent position than in more traditional theories on the proposition. In both cases an enumeration of the predicates that can be truly predicated of the subject is merely an explication of what is already in the subject (monad, substance or Ns). And such an explication procedure never yields anything really new. When I suggest a difference between Leibnizian/narrativist and current analyses of the proposition I must warn against a possible misinterpretation of this suggestion. I do not doubt the validity of the general idea behind traditional analyses of the proposition as long as we are dealing with propositions on ordinary things. However, when we are dealing with propositions on Nss (the narrativist analogue of Leibniz's monads or substances) this general idea is no longer correct, which may be clarified as follows.

Current theories of the proposition have a strong tendency to translate the subject-term in a proposition into another set of predicates. Since Russell we have learned to read propositions like "Fa" as "$\dot{\exists}$x" (uniquely a = x and Fx), where "a" is not a logical proper name.

This strategy has ultimately led to the position (adopted e.g. by Quine) that subject-terms in propositions should be reduced to variables of quantification. Quine's position, which is so characteristic of the general drift of all contemporary analyses of the proposition has been summarized by Strawson in the following way: "The relevant part of Quine's programme of paraphrase can most simply be summed up as follows. All *terms* other than the variables of quantification will be found, in canonical notation, to be general terms in predicative position. The *position* of singular terms is reserved for the quantifiers and the variables of quantification; and since quantifiers themselves cannot count as *terms,* the only singular terms left are the variables of quantification"[12]. Thus, in Quine's view of the proposition the subject of the proposition has almost completely "evaporated"; the only things that still remind us of its once

11. Cf. Lorenz; p. 319: "die Pointe des von mir zu begründenden Interpretationsvorschlags lautet, dass konsequent die Monade mit der ihrem vollständigen Begriff zugeordneten vollständigen Kennzeichnung, gleichsam einem voll entfalteten Namen, zu identifizieren ist". So just like Strawson Lorenz identifies monads not with things (as Leibniz did) but with concepts.
12. Strawson (2); p. 79.

having been there are the variables of quantification. And even proper names, which one might suppose to be relatively immune to this attack on the subject-term, have had to surrender and should be dissolved, according to many philosophers into a number of predicates. Since Frege it has often been argued that proper names have a connotation which is embodied in a set of identifying descriptions and it will be obvious that this connotation also will ultimately be "pushed back" into the predicate-terms of propositions containing proper names. Once more, it is not my intention to pronounce upon the acceptability of current theories on "normal" propositions: I only want to point out that in these theories the subject-terms are often stripped of content and function, while the rôle of the predicate-term is heavily emphasized[13]. In narrative logic, however, this "evaporation" of the subject-term is not permitted, because it would yield false statements. Suppose we transform the statement 1) "N_1 is p" into the statement 2) there is an x such that x uniquely has the properties that individuate N_1 and the property p. Then statement 2) is false because there are many more x's which have these properties, taking into account that Nss are only individuated by the properties they possess (i.e. the statements they do contain) and not by those which they do not possess. Therefore, the subject-term in statements on Nss is inviolable.

Thus we should distinguish between two kinds of propositions, 1) propositions on Nss and 2) propositions on other things, e.g. those contained by our universe. And corresponding to the two kinds of propositions distinguished, there are two theories of the proposition. This difference between the characteristics of "normal" propositions and propositions on Nss has an important implication. In history and in (some of) the social sciences the absence of well-confirmed formalized theories is nowadays often regretted. It is a peculiarity of historiography

13. Some ten years ago Kripke rejected this view of proper names; since then many logicians have been convinced by his arguments. According to the traditional view of proper names sense determines reference, whereas Kripke reverses this relationship. He argues that proper names cannot have a sense because what the sense attributes to the referent of a proper name might not have been true of it. (Kripke; pp. 265 ff.). We can conceive of a *possible world* in which Aristotle was *not* the teacher of Alexander. The difficulty with Kripke's theory is, in my opinion, that the phrase "possible world" is ambiguous. Firstly, we could think of a possible world in the sense that our *actual* world might have been different from what we (mistakenly) think it is or was. An adherent of the traditional view of proper names could plausibly argue that in such a case our *corrected* factual knowledge of e.g. Aristotle should determine the sense of the proper name Aritstotle. Secondly, the phrase "possible world" might be taken to refer to a world different from our *actual* world. We can *discover* that Aristotle never was Alexander's teacher and we can *conceive* of a world in which Aristotle was never asked for this job. But in the latter case we are no longer warranted to use the proper name Aristotle and should speak of e.g. "Aristotle^2". Proper names identify individual things and not *classes* of individuals (real and imaginary). And this no longer presents a challenge to the traditional view of proper names. Disregarding the ambiguity of the phrase "possible world" caused Kripke to violate the logical nature of proper names.

and (parts of) sociology and psychology that concept-formation takes place without a corresponding theory-formation being possible. Concepts such as "the Renaissance", "political power" or "social class" — which all denote (sets of) Nss — are often introduced while no formalized theories can be or have been developed in which the exact properties of these "things" are defined. The result is that when in the social sciences attempts are made to establish formal theories on things or phenomena in socio-historical reality these theories hardly ever succeed in isolating those and only those variables (i.e. properties of socio-historical phenomena) in terms of which these phenomena can be accurately described. Aspects of these phenomena which the theory does not mention may always influence the phenomena which the theory purports to describe. In the exact sciences such uncertainties are un-typical. For example, the time of oscillation of a bar with the length 1 is proportional to $\sqrt{1/g}$ (where "g" refers to the gravitational constant); the characteristics of a bar not mentioned in the law or not necessary for a correct understanding of it (like the colour, the weight or the history of a particular bar), are irrelevant when the law is applied to special cases. This is not hard to explain. We should be aware of the fact that current theories of the proposition are very well suited to a representation of the assertions made in the exact sciences: laws of nature can always, or most often, be read as follows: for every x, if x is A then x is B. Here, as in Quine's "canonical notation", the tendency is manifest to "evaporate" the sub ject-term so that only relations between predicates are left. However, when narrative concepts come into play a different analysis of the proposition no longer warrants the kind of assertions that are made in the exact sciences: now the predicate-term shows a tendency to "evaporate". Every statement of the form "for every x, if x is A then x is B", when made on the objects in the narrativist universe is immediately falsifiable, because we can conceive of many Nss that satisfy the antecedent but not the consequence of the implication. And in the narrativist universe what is conceivable is real.

There is a second affinity between Leibnizian and narrative logic that should be mentioned in this connection. In Leibniz's system there is no place for causality because any "real" influence (or — as he called it himself "transeunt" causality) between monads is rejected by him. Each monad or substance has its own life-programme, unchangeable and true for all time, that accounts completely for all the states which a monad or substance goes through during its history. When things do not exert "real" influence upon each other so that it makes a difference to their history, causality is out of the question. A similar story can be told with regard to the Nss in the narrativist universe. It would, of course, be absurd to say that Nss, i.e. systems of statements, should exert a causal influence upon one another. Concepts, notions or statements cannot properly be said to have a causal influence upon one another, even if they could be deduced from each other analytically or with the help of

empirical laws. In the case of the oscillating bar mentioned above there is no relation of causality between the concept of the length of a bar and the concept of the oscillation time of a pendulum. For the same reason it does not make sense to speak of "the cause of the Renaissance" or "the cause of the French Revolution". Very convincing stories may be told about Italian culture from Dante to Machiavelli or about the domestic problems of France from, say, 1774 to 1794, but even in such narratios (complexes of) events are not connected in the same way as in causal explanations. For, as we shall see in section (3), (parts of) Nss do not refer to (complexes of) events or aspects of them. Therefore, when historians say that they are trying to find out what "the cause of the French Revolution" was, this means that they want to give a convincing account of French history from, say, 1774 to 1794 and not that they wish to relate causally two (sets of) events. Historical understanding is achieved by *describing* the past with the help of a strong and vigorous Ns and not by the discovery of *causal* relationships. Similarly, the development of modern science since the 17th century only became possible after Aristotelian "why-questions" had been discarded for "how-questions". "Der denkende Mensch irrt besonders, wenn er sich nach Ursache und Wirkung erkundigt, die beide zusammen machen das unteilbare Phänomen" (Goethe).

(2) *Types*. Is it possible to discern types of Nss? Daily reality contains many types or classes of things such as dogs, chairs, human beings and so on, all denoted by their sortal concepts. Admittedly, we can say that the narrativist universe contains at least one type of thing, that is, "narrative substances", but it may be asked whether this total set could not be divided into sub-classes or sub-types. Before we can give a satisfactory answer to this question and derive some important conclusions from it, it will be necessary to make a small detour. Let us return to a primordial stage in our perception of reality: a stage, that is, in which no individuals and certainly no types of individuals are as yet recognized in reality. We could think of the way in which a newborn baby perceives reality. He has not yet learned to discern the "Gestalt" of individual things from their background. Reality is to him a "buzzing confusion" of moving and motionless colour spots, of noises, of rough and smooth surfaces and so on. He does not separate trees from the soil they are rooted in, nor the claws of a cock from the dunghill it stands upon: he only perceives what I propose to call the *qualities* of a diffuse and structured reality. These qualities correspond to predicates like red, hard, round etc. which I shall suppose the newborn baby to be acquainted with. No sortal predicates will be allowed. If we want to trace the route from our present perception of reality back to this primeval state of affairs in which these qualities are still "running free from their subjects", current analyses of the proposition are very helpful. Dissolving the individual things of our universe into their constituent properties is a procedure that runs parallel to the proposal to transform all propositions of the form "Fa" into propositions of the

form: ɐx (uniquely a = x and Fx). In the remainder of this section we shall follow the same route but in the opposite direction: starting with qualities, we shall attempt to reconstruct from them our world and the individual things it contains. The former route is analytical: ours will be synthetical. Lastly, in this section - as in the whole of this book — we will reason from a logical and not from an epistemological point of view.

We may describe socio-historical reality in accordance with the "baby-view" of reality; by doing so we have not committed ourselves to any view whatsoever as to what (types of) individuals the world contains. Consequently, we find ourselves here at the ultimate level from which we can explain our recognition of specific (types of) individuals. In the preceding chapters of this book we have seen that Nss can be constituted out of statements, and because the logical form of these statements on reality — i.e. statements which are the properties of Nss — is irrelevant to narrativist philosophy, we may be sure that if Nss can be formed out of conventional statements, Nss can also be built of statements formulated in accordance with the "baby-view" of reality. So we can conceive of Nss without having to recognize the presence of (types of) individuals in reality. One of the most important tasks of narrativist philosophy is to explain how and why certain (types of) individuals are discerned in preference to others. Here we have to face two problems: a) what is logically at stake whenever (types of) individuals are recognized in reality (i.e. certain sets of statements formulated in consonance with the baby-view of reality are connected within Nss), and b) why is the connection of specific sets of statements preferred to other alternatives (for instance, why are certain sets of statements collected in *two* types of individual things such as "cups" and "saucers" and not in only *one* type of individual thing)? The former question is in conformity with the logical approach we have followed in this and the preceding chapter; the second raises the problem as to what rules we actually apply, by what pragmatic considerations we are guided, when we decide on the recognition of specific (types of) individuals in reality. The science that answers this second question is, perhaps, the most fundamental propaedeutics to history and parts of psychology and sociology. But let us suppose that we already have these rules at our disposal and, furthermore, that these rules have been consistently applied. Or, to be a little more precise, when specific parts of reality show relevant similarities (in order to avoid circular reasoning this should not and *need* not be defined in terms of individual things), the result of the application of these rules actually displays significant resemblances. For instance, statements that express perceptions of what *we* call "trees" and "the soil in which a tree is planted" should not be collected at one time with the help of individual things "this tree" and "this soil" and at another time by the individual thing "this tree-soil" (which refers to both what *we* call "tree" and "soil").

If, then, narrativization - i.e. the collection of statements within Nss - has taken place in accordance with the pragmatical rules I have just mentioned, we can draw up the following diagram. On a horizontal axis we peg out the statements that can be made on our socio-historical world. Because historiography never pretends or attempts to represent *all* of the past, the number of these statements need not be infinite. We will say, therefore, that the statements indicated on the horizontal axis initially embrace all the statements actually mentioned in existing and future narratios and, next, that any number of further statements may be added. All statements are formulated in accordance with the "baby-view" of reality, so that the presence of certain (types of) individual things is not presupposed. On the vertical axis the Nss are indicated that have been or will be constructed with the help of the statements on the horizontal axis. This can only be done, of course, after the narrativization or the historicization of our world has taken place. It should be noted once more that we are still at a very elementary stage of our conceptual ordering of the world: although certain *linguistic things* (i.e. Nss) have been *individuated,* no *types of things* have already been *identified* with them.

In order to be aware of the elementariness of this conceptual ordering of reality we should realize that at this stage normal things like chairs and dogs are still conceptualized in a way reminiscent of how historians conceptualize the past with the help of terms like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War". Here we still find a looseness that is quite appropriate when we write history on a larger scale, but entirely a-typical of our speaking about normal things. It follows — and this is a momentous conclusion — that concepts like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War" are of a logically "lower", more fundamental type than the terms we use for referring to normal things. (Parts of) Nss are the ultimate elements out of which our notions of individual things are built up and it is not the other way round. This may cause astonishment, because at first in sight we are inclined to believe that a term like "the Renaissance" should, logically, have a much more complicated and much more abstract status than a term like "this chair". But as we shall see, terms referring to normal things are of more "abstract" nature, because their use presupposes a typification-procedure that has not yet been applied as long as we speak in terms of Nss (like "the Renaissance"). Or, in other words, "historicity" (i.e. Nss) precedes "individuality" (i.e. the recognition of individual things). This enables us to draw the following line of demarcation between history and the sciences: history logically precedes our ordinary experience of daily reality, the sciences go beyond it. This logical order was expressed by Leibniz in temporal terms: "Les langues ont été; formées avant les sciences et le peuple ignorant et sans lettres a réduit les choses à certaines espèces"[14]. And I think that Hegel made a similar point when he criticized empiricism for its tendency to deal with the abstract (i.e. empirical reality) as if it were the concretely

14. G.W. Leibniz, *Nouveaux essais,* Paris 1966; p. 275.

given.

We can now complete our diagram by placing in a horizontal row behind each narrative substance a "1" or a "0" indicating whether this Ns does or does not contain a specific statement pegged out on the horizontal axis. When we have completed our diagram in this way, we may ask whether types of Nss can be discerned. It is essential to realize that *two* typification procedures can be conceived of. This may be clarified by the following example. Imagine we are given a large number of nails and we are asked to sort them according to length. We could measure all the nails, write down the length of each of them and see if certain classes appear more or less spontaneously. For instance the smallest nails may happen to be between 1.24 cm and 1.26 cm, next there is a set of 1.74 to 1.76 cm and so on. But we may equally well prefer a different classification: we may collect the nails of 0.50 cm (if there are any), next those of 0.51 cm, of 0.52 cm and so on. The distribution of the lengths of the nails and the aim of our classifying them will decide which procedure will be most convenient. For reasons that will shortly become clear we could speak here of an "extensional" versus an "intensional" typification procedure.

Accordingly, we can typify Nss in two ways. Firstly, we can follow the extensional approach by looking at the Nss as such and attempting to form classes of Nss that share some significant resemblances in the way "1's" and "0's" are distributed in the diagram. By means of this extensional approach we may discover the class of Nss "on the Renaissance" or the class of Nss that deal with the history of social classes or of states. Of course, when collecting Nss on social classes or states typification will be different from when collecting Nss on the Renaissance or the Cold War. In the former case we will pay a lot of attention to structural resemblances between the Nss and disregard those statements in the Nss that refer to specific times and circumstances, whereas in the second case it will be just the other way round. But in both cases, historiography being what it is and what it will presumably be in the future, we are dealing with classes of Nss that appear more or less spontaneously. When we look at what historiography has produced in this and the last few centuries, we find that the above mentioned types of Nss occur frequently. Moreover, Nss are not constructed at random. It is therefore to be expected that a large number of Nss that can in principle be conceived of will not actually be constructed by historians. Consequently, it seems likely that under the influence of these rules Nss are constructed in such a way that certain classificatory patterns automatically appear. And, of course, when we look at historiography we find this to be the case: actual Nss have a strong tendency to coagulate in clusters while between the clusters "narrative space" is more or less empty (for an explanation of this fact see p. 235).

We could call the corresponding typification procedure an "extensional" one, because actual sets of *complete* Nss are classified by it. What narrative *things* and not what *concepts* of types of narrative

things we have will determine classification in the approach under discussion here. It may be wondered how reliable this way of classifying Nss will be; that is, will this extensional typification of Nss really succeed in defining types of Nss so that no ambiguities with regard to the typification of Nss can arise?

In order to answer this question it may be illuminating to make a remark on extensional typification in general. Suppose we are dealing with a set of things that either *are* already very similar to each other, or, if this is not the case, always *could* be expanded in such a way that the resulting set consists of things that are very much alike. To be a little more precise: for each two things a and b from of this set, a third thing c can be found (now or in the future) so that a and c, and b and c are more similar to each other than a and b mutually are. Whenever this is the case, ambiguities with regard to typification cannot be avoided. The reason is that every attempt to demarcate those things belonging to a specific class from all the other things not belonging to it will fail in the case of those things that are nearer to a and b (where "a" and "b" refer to things within and outside the class that are supposed to be nearest to each other respectively) than a and b mutually are.

Let us try to translate this insight into our problem of the typification of Nss. We may have some intuition as to what Nss tend to join each other in clusters and try to classify them accordingly. This may seem an easy and obvious thing to do. However, the situation I sketched in the previous paragraph does obtain here as well: for each two Nss N_1 and N_2, whether they are on the same side of the "border" of a cluster or not, a third Ns N_3 can be found (now or in the future) that is closer to N_1 and N_2 than N_1 and N_2 mutually are. And whether N_3 does or does not belong to a specific cluster is not a matter we can *ascertain,* but can only *decide* upon. Take the following very extreme example. Suppose N_1 contains the statements 1 …..p, and N_2 ….the statements 1 …..p,q; then we can conceive of a Ns N_3 containing 1…..p,r and upon whose class-partnership we can only *decide.* Thus, for *each* attempt to delineate a certain class of Nss, a statement (i.e. a possible property of Nss), corresponding to that specific attempt, can be conceived of, so that we can only *decide* whether Nss containing that statement do or do not belong to the class in question. Every extensionalist attempt to classify Nss, therefore, generates its own specific ambiguities. And because, when classifying Nss, "the borders" of a certain class can reasonably be said to be *anywhere* (in contrast to, for instance, the borders of a country or a plot of land), a very wide variety of unclassifiable Nss can be expected for every attempt at classification. In summary, an extensionalist typification of Nss can never be precise. We may have some intuitions as to how specific Nss (on, e.g. "the Renaissance" or on national states) tend to form clusters, and for practical reasons recognizing certain clusters may be preferable to recognizing others, but every endeavour to attain precision can always be thwarted. The conclusion to be drawn from the above discussion is that as long as socio-historical reality is studied

exclusively in terms of complete Nss, generalizations do not express any truths on the nature of (socio-historical) *reality;* they only reflect regularities in how we have actually *decided* to conceptualize reality (in terms of complete Nss).

Next, we can classify Nss intensionally. That is, we may form or postulate the *concept* of a type of Nss and collect Nss accordingly. In the same way, in the example of the nails, we could divide a decimetre into equal units (e.g., from 0.50 to 1.49 cm, from 1.50 to 2.49 cm and so on). The classification of the nails will present no difficulties: a nail not belonging to a certain class is bound to belong to another, and we know which. In the same vein we could note the recurrence of a specific set of properties of Nss, e.g. "$p_j...p_n$", in the Nss included in the diagram. Consequently, we could define a certain type of Ns as those Nss for which the statements "N_i is $p_j...p_n$" (where "i" covers all the indices of the Nss in the narrativist universe) are true. Again, no ambiguities can arise here. For each Ns we can ascertain with absolute accuracy whether it does or does not belong to a particular type (class) of Nss. Even when new statements and Nss are added to the original sets of our diagram, the original typification does not get entangled in ambiguities. Indeed, it can be maintained without emendations.

How should we interpret the fact that an extensional typification of Nss will never be completely successful, while an intensional typification presents no difficulties at all? We found that *each* extensional typification of Nss generates a (set of) statement(s) so that the class partnership of those Nss of which this (set of) statement(s) forms a part is a matter we can only decide upon. Decisions will have to be made here. Thus, in the case of extensional typification, it is impossible to enumerate a set of statement(s) (i.e. properties of Nss), the possession of which would be a sufficient and necessary condition for a Ns to belong to a certain class of Ns. Intensional typification, on the other hand, *does* offer such conditions. Once a decision has been made on the nature of the Nss of a certain intensional type, it can be unambiguously established whether a given Ns does or does not belong to that type. Consequently - and that is a very momentous transition - intensional typification of Nss provides us with the basis for the typification of *things* in our world, while extensional typification can never do so. To assert that we can discern certain intensional types of Nss all sharing a fixed number of properties (i.e. statements) is tantamount to saying that, apparently, in our narrativist perceptions of reality certain conjunctions of statements expressing specific perceptions of reality tend to recur. And, certainly, the fact that our world contains types of things such as chairs, dogs, snowflakes, heaps of old iron etc. can be expressed by the assertion that our world is such that fixed sets of statements expressing the presence of certain qualities in reality are sometimes *all* true at the same time, whereas it never happens that a *very* substantial part of this set of statements is true while the rest is false. Thus, the types of things we recognize in reality are the result of an intensional typification of Nss.

And the "types of things" meant here can reasonably be said to include both the things we refer to with the help of sortal terms as well as those things referred to by mass terms. Of course, the kinds of qualities perceived in reality to typify e.g. "heaps of old iron" (a mass term) will largely differ from the qualities taken into account for the typification of e.g. "dogs" (a sortal term). Yet this need not give rise to complications at the present level of our discussion. That the proposed analysis of how (types of) individual things come to be discerned in reality is immaterial to the problem as to how either sortal or mass terms are introduced into language suggests the very elementary nature of the present discussion.

It would be too complicated to elaborate the very simple scheme given just now into a more complete one that accounts more fully for how and what (types of) individual things are recognized in reality. As a matter of fact this would require a thorough investigation of a large number of rather intractable "pragmatic" considerations, reflecting how we tend to react to the contingent nature of our universe. In his *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault has brilliantly shown that this "order of things", apparently so stable, has been subject to the most radical changes over the past four hundred years[15]. Moreover, to these "pragmatic" culture-determined considerations should also be added the sort of argument used in the sciences to claim the existence of e.g. subatomary particles. When (types of) individual things are recognized in reality, we are dealing with a long and complicated chain or hierarchy of types of individual things that ranges from the very elementary level of the typification of Nss to the individual things discovered e.g. in the exact sciences. But this elementary level of the typification of Nss is bedrock in the course of the process of dividing our world into (types of) individual things. From that elementary level onwards we may abstract from, and manipulate in many different ways, the qualities that have already been tied together into (types of) individual things, in order to produce new

15. Foucault's book demonstrates that the way in which we order things or individualities is not at all as obvious as we like to think. "When we establish a considered classification, when we say that a cat and a dog resemble each other less than two greyhounds do, even if both are tame or embalmed, even if both are frenzied, even if both have just broken the water pitcher, what is the ground on which we are able to establish the validity of this classification with complete certainty? On what "table", according to what grid of identities, simulitudes, analogies, have we become accustomed to sort out so many different and similar things? What is this coherence - which, as is immediately apparent, is neither determined by an a *priori* and necessary concatenation, nor imposed on us by immediately perceptible contents? For it is not a question of linking consequences, but of grouping and isolating, of analysing, of matching and pigeon-holing concrete contents; there is nothing more tentative, nothing more empirical (superficially, at least) than the process of establishing an order among things; nothing that demands a sharper eye or a surer better-articulated language; nothing that more insistently requires that one allow oneself to be carried along by the proliferation of qualities and forms". See M. Foucault, *The order of things,* New York 1973; p. xix.

types.

There is thus a relation of transitivity between our recognizing one type of individual thing on one level of abstraction — from the perception of the qualities of our world — and a higher or lower level: the capacity to individuate individual things is handed over from one type of individual thing to a newly constituted type. Having recognized one type of individual thing is like a mapping out of our world, and this is often a stage preliminary to a more detailed typification of reality. Therefore, being an individual thing is not an intrinsic property of things; it is always based upon a property which a certain *type-concept* may have in relation to another *type-concept.* Nevertheless, type-concepts are the islands in the unruly and ever restless sea of our experience. The (types of) individual things we discern in reality are not simply given to us along with reality itself: types form together an intricate, constructed, relational network that has as its ultimate foundation the typification of Nss. This network is constructed in accordance with numerous decisions we have made to that effect. To give even an approximate account of how such decisions are reached would require not only a complicated description of the socio-cultural habits responsible for our orientation in reality but also an exposition of part of the procedures followed in the sciences. And even then there may remain inconsistencies and imprecisions that hardly allow of rational explanation. For instance, am I sitting in (on) a chair or on a cushion and a chair? Is the receiver of a telephone part of the telephone or is it a separate thing? And what about a lamp and a lampshade or a car and its engine? Because these pairs of things always go together we don't worry about imprecisions or contradictions (e.g. "it bought a lamp; the lamp is nice, but the lampshade is ugly"). Here we find ourselves, so to speak, in the eye of the hurricane of our partitioning the world into individual things.

Up to now I have always spoken of *types* of individual things. It may be argued that we often seem to recognize individual things without knowing as yet to what type they belong. It should be noted, however, that in essence the typification of individual things is similar to such regulative ideas as "every event has a cause". We wouldn't accept the statement that a particular individual thing does not belong to any type — if we understood at all what such a statement could possibly mean - so we shall always interpret such a state of affairs as an indication that our knowledge is insufficient and that the individual thing ought to be subjected to a closer (scientific) investigation.

The two ways in which Nss can be collected help us to explain a conspicuous difference between terms like "the Renaissance" or "the (a) state", on the one hand, and terms referring to normal things like dogs and snowflakes on the other hand. It should be observed that when, e.g. thanks to biological or psychological research new properties of the human being are discovered (i.e. when new statements are added to the relevant Nss formulated according to the "baby-view" of the world) the meaning of the term "human being" may remain unchanged. What is or

is not a human being is essentially immune to what biologists and psychologists may one day discover about human beings (obviously, it is not the rather un-problematic referential capacity of the term "human being" but its meaning that is at stake here). On the other hand, terms like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War" do not have such a fixed meaning: each history of the Renaissance adds different connotations to the term. Admittedly, there is a weak core that tends to recur: the term "the Renaissance" will mostly be associated with a revival of an interest in Antiquity. But even such a "core" has no immutable stability. Future historians may play down or possibly even deny this classical revival of the Renaissance, or argue that "the essence" of the Renaissance should be looked for elsewhere, whereas they may retain the term "the Renaissance". One might even hazard the opinion that the "pictures" historians present of such cultural phenomena as the Renaissance can never have an element that is common to all, because if such an element existed it could not properly be said to be part of a narrative "picture" of the past. What is common to all persons doing D, cannot be part of "the way" in which a does D, of "the way" in which b does D, and Nss are ways of looking at the past. However, we need not commit ourselves to such a risky view and may be content with stating that with respect to a great portion, and historiographically certainly the most *significant* portion, of the statements made in a study on the Renaissance it can always be meaningfully asked: is this *really* part of the meaning of the term "the Renaissance"? Although a considerable number of statements on the Renaissance are acceptable to anybody (for instance, that the Renaissance did not take place during the reign of Charlemagne, nor during that of Louis XV, that the Renaissance was not a King of England etc.) *this* class of statement - if the statements are assumed to be meaningful — can never add up to a "negative" definition of the Renaissance that is satisfactory both for historians and for narrative philosophy. For (types of) Nss cannot be defined by an enumeration of the properties they do *not* have.

The meaning of the term "the Renaissance" is in permanent flux; in the future the whole concept may even be eliminated altogether. Such a thing is, of course, inconceivable when we think of normal things and their concepts. Biological research (in contrast to historical research) will never result in the elimination of the concepts denoting its subject-matter (such as the concept "cow" or "human being"). And it is interesting to note that the only occasion on which a tendency in this direction could be observed was brought about by a historical analysis of the genus "human being" (i.e. the evolution theory). The explanation of this difference is that an extensional collection of Nss does not permit of the enumeration of a fixed conjunction of properties of Nss that define at the same time a specific kind of "normal" things, whereas this actually can be done when Nss are collected intensionally. Extensional typification prevents us from separating form and content. Each individual state, religion, cultural movement etc. — or, rather, the idea of such a state etc. — is a world in

itself and cannot be split up into 1) a general form and 2) a particular content. Hegel's revolt against formalism is quite to the point in this connection[16].

The fact that we can always meaningfully discuss what is and what is not the Renaissance distinguishes terms like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War" from terms referring to normal things like dogs and snowflakes. It is always possible to write the history of such "normal" things as Louis XIV or the Château de Versailles: because parts of Nss collected intensionally and denoting specific types of things can always be expanded (in several ways) so as to develop into complete Nss (e.g. histories on Louis XIV or the Château de Versailles). On the other hand we cannot write a history of the Renaissance or of a state however much appearances may suggest the contrary: terms like "the Renaissance" or "the (a) state S" always refer to complete Nss which can only be typified extensionally and it would be absurd to write the history of a Ns, for Nss have no history. Historiographical studies that are misleadingly called *A History of the Cold War* or *A History of the Renaissance* are not histories on "things" that existed in the past in the way Louis XIV did; they are accounts of certain aspects of the European past, presenting a certain "picture", or Ns, on that past. And to these pictures or Nss we can refer with the help of terms like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War" (although we should remember the ambiguity of these proper names of Nss). Hence we can say that there are many Renaissances and many Cold Wars; likewise we have many "revolutions", not only because there is a French, an American, a Russian Revolution but also because many Nss have been constructed to account for each of these revolutions. And when we say this we are always referring to a large number of *complete* Nss. Thus, the fact that we speak of "revolutions" (in the plural), of "states" (in the plural) and so on, whereas there seems to have been only *one* Renaissance and only *one* Cold War, does not imply that "things" like "revolutions" and "States" should be put in the same class with normal things like human beings or chateaux. Whoever speaks of "revolutions" or of "states" in the plural collects *complete* Nss extensionally and does not refer to a type of things corresponding to an intensional abstraction from complete Nss.

Of course we can *propose* intensional typifications of such entities,

16. Cf. Hegel (1); p. 175: "Gleicherweise kann chinesische, indische Philosophie und eleatische, pythagoreische, ferner spinozistische, oder sogar alle moderne Metaphysik parallelisiert werden, insofern allerdings alle das Eine oder die Einheit, das ganz abstrakt Allgemeine zugrundelegen; aber solche Vergleichung [i.e. formalism] oder sogar Gleichstellung ist höchst oberflächlich. In ihr wird gerade das übersehen, worauf es allein ankommt, auf die Bestimmtheit solcher Einheit; und den wesentlichen Unterschied macht gerade dies aus, ob jene Einheit abstrakt oder aber konkret, - konkret bis zur Einheit in sich, die Geist ist, - gefasst wird. Jenes Gleichstellen [i.e. formalism] aber beweist eben, dass er nur die abstrakte Einheit kennt, und indem es über Philosophien urteilt, in demjenigen unwissend ist, was das Interesse der Philosophie ausmacht".

e.g. a group of people is organized within a "state" when they have an authority that enables them "de faire et casser la loi" (Bodin), but such intensional typifications can always be questioned. Thus Bodin's typification has been rejected by Romantic theories of the state. Similarly, we can always meaningfully ask "was the American Revolution *really* a revolution?" (Brinton answered this question in the affirmative and Barrington Moore in the negative)[17]. On the other hand one could claim with Ranke and Bakhuizen van den Brink[18] that the Dutch Revolt *really* was a revolution. Although until now historians have rarely done so, they could not settle the matter by simply declaring anyone who calls the Dutch Revolt a revolution to be a fool who does not even know what a revolution is. Therefore they will wait with sceptical interest for the arguments in favour of such an unconventional position. Such disputes cannot be solved by resorting to conceptual knowledge. But who would have the patience to wait for arguments when someone calls a horse a cow? As a consequence, we can find here the criterion permitting us to distinguish between intensionally and extensionally typified collections of Nss. Is it meaningful to ask "is this *really* an x?". If so, x corresponds to a set of Nss that can only be typified extensionally; if not, the corresponding Nss can be typified intensionally.

In the complexity of our historical past certain patterns occasionally seem to recur in a vague and ill-defined way; whenever this is the case we may feel inclined to speak of "revolutions" or "states" in the plural, because narrativization-procedures will tend to show corresponding similarities. But such occasions can never be interpreted as if a new type of normal things had been discovered in historical reality in the way explorers discovered unknown species of animals; every attempt to define with precision this alleged "type of things" can be successfully challenged and every attempt to circumscribe these recurring patters is subject to reasonable doubt. An extensional typification is all one can achieve here. Terms like "revolution" or "state" are not ordinary sortal concepts like "chair" or "dog"; being the result of an extensional typification of Nss no nominalist definition of them can be given of them. Neither can the reference of these terms be "fixed" in the way suggested by Kripke and

17. Barrington Moore Jr, *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy,* Aylesbury 1969; p. 112; C. Brinton, *The anatomy of revolution,* New York 1965; p. 24.
18. Ranke wrote: "noch einmal machte sich das lokale Interesse gegen alle Eingriffe oberherrlicher Gewalt geltend. Die Revolution der Niederlande besteht darin, dass dies den Sieg davon trägt. Tyrannie hatte einmal die Freiheit zu Folge". Quoted in G. Berg, *Leopold von Ranke als akademischer Lehrer,* Göttingen 1968; pp. 153-4. See also R.C. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *Studiën en schetsen over vaderlandsche geschiedenis en letteren* Vol I, Amsterdam 1863; Bakhuizen describes the Dutch Revolt as follows: "maar de wettigheid, waarop zij aanspraak maakte, was niet meer dan schijn, was een voortzetting van, een aanknoping aan het werk der omwenteling, in 1566 begonnen, en van hare handelingen kan men zeggen: het was allerminst een restauratie, het was niet eens een reformatie, het was een revolutie" (pp. 507, 525-525).

Putnam[19] because even discussions on what the exemplars of these terms are can never be settled conclusively.

Ultimately, the foregoing discussion provides the justification for the thesis — put forward in this book several times — that historicity precedes individuality[20]. On the face of it, the reverse order seems more likely i.e. that *things* are first given to us and that their history can only be written afterwards once we have followed their course through time and change. But even for the normal things in our universe this picture is only part of the truth: types of normal things can only be recognized in reality after historicization of the world has taken place and an intensional typification of Nss has been successful. In other words, our world contains a number of things of which it is presupposed that they actually have a history (i.e. are a type of thing) and *then,* indeed, we can write these histories. But because historicity is always presupposed — even if we are dealing with a thing of a certain type — even then individuality (being a thing) is not logically prior to historicity. To sum up, "normal" things do not contradict our thesis because we already *know* or presuppose that they have a history. Lastly, if it is reasonable to say that those things "exist" whose history we can write, we may conclude that "existence" corresponds to a property of specific sets of Nss, viz. their being intensionally typifiable. Both the nature of reality itself and the narrativization procedures we apply to it determine whether a particular set of Nss will or will not have this property.

I would like to refer to the beginning of this discussion when I suggested that socio-historical reality should be described in statements that do not presuppose the presence (or "existence") of certain types of individual things. We found that on this most elementary basis, thanks to two different ways of typifying Nss, the existence of normal things and of groups of vaguely similar Nss (e.g. on "the Renaissance") could be explained. Certainly, and with good reason, the objection will be raised that such a procedure is a highly unrealistic account of how terms like "the Renaissance" have come to be used. Whoever writes on the Renaissance presupposes the presence of an immensely wide variety of individual things like paintings, sculptures, statesmen, condottieri, popes, philosophers and so on. Writing a historiography of the Renaissance without assuming the existence of these types of individual things is well-nigh impossible. Consequently, so the objection continues, it cannot be true that history could be written without the recognition of certain (types of) individual things in (historical) reality. Thus, individuality must precede historicity and it is not the other way round. My answer to this objection is as follows. When I argued that historicity precedes individuality I always had in mind the historicity and the individuality of *one and the same thing:* I claimed that individual things in reality can only be recognized as such on the basis of the relevant Nss (embodying

19. See Kripke and H. Putnam, Is semantics possible?, *Metaphilosophy* 3 (1970).
20. Cf. p. 117.

their historicity) out of which they are constructed (by intensional typification). So the present objection would only be to the point if it could be shown that first a *thing* (to be called "the Renaissance") is given to us and that its *history* is written after that. And the analysis I have given of concepts like "the Renaissance" by no means commits me to such a view.

I should like to make a few additional remarks with regard to this discussion. Firstly, it will be possible at least in theory to recast the statements that form a Ns *Renaissance* in such a way that the presupposition of the presence in our universe of certain (types of) things is eliminated. No doubt a rather odd thing to do, but it *could* be done. But secondly, and this is more important, it must be noted that the problem of the historicization or narrativization of our world is precisely the same a) on the very elementary level (where, in the end, the concepts of (types of) normal individual things are formed), and b) on the level where concepts like "the Renaissance" are formed. On both levels historicization takes place without there being an individual thing (e.g. a "Renaissance") whose history is being written. The recognition of the presence of certain (types of) individual things in historical reality like Rafael or the *Mona Lisa* when a Ns on the Renaissance is being constructed does not alter this fact. That such individuals are given to the historian when he writes a Ns on the Renaissance is most convenient for the practice of writing history, but irrelevant to narrative logic.

And maybe even the practice of history does not depend so strongly on the presence of (types of) individual things as we might surmise. Our knowledge and our ideas on the past are largely "channelled" by Nss like "the Renaissance", at least to a greater extent than by knowledge of individual things (whose function is more "illustrative" (see p. 138)). Suppose somebody who is unacquainted with history is to be instructed on the European past from, say, 1400 to 1550 AD. Then the best way to start is to give him an idea of "the Renaissance", "the decline of the Church", or of "the rise of the New Monarchies" (all Nss!) and not to provide him with a lot of biographical details of the lives of individual popes, monarchs or men of letters. Apparently, the cognitive force of those Nss outweighs by far that of statements on actions and characteristics of individual persons. Those statements are merely the material for real historical knowledge and not historical knowledge itself. So, even in the practice of history knowledge of Nss is more essential than knowledge of individuals.

I would like to add a final remark. As in the example of the nails, the decision as to whether an extensional or intensional typification is to be preferred, is always a pragmatic one. Narrative logic only claims that we are at liberty to choose between two possibilities: 1) an intensional typification of Nss on states or revolutions *can* be attempted and 2) we *can* speak of the world as if it did not contain any (types of) individual things. However, in the former case, confusion and disagreements will prove to be ineradicable and, in the latter, speaking of reality may be

hopelessly cumbersome. Nevertheless, the recognition of certain (types of) individual things can only have a pragmatic and not a logical justification. However, although in some cases it may be hard to decide which typification procedure is to be preferred (take concepts like "parliamentary democracy" or "republic"), even in these cases we are not permitted to disregard which typification procedure we have in mind when using these terms.

(3) *Do Narrative substances refer?* Of course this question can be answered in the affirmative for the names of Nss (if Nss happen to have one): they refer to the Nss named by them. But can Nss *themselves* be said to refer? At first it seems reasonable to suppose that they can: shouldn't there be "something" in historical reality that corresponds to a Ns on, for instance, the Renaissance? Surely, if we should deny such a correspondence, the construction of Nss would look like a completely arbitrary affair, where the historian's fantasy can go its own way unbridled. Either Nss do refer, or they are mere invitations to conjure up historiographical dreams. This will be our initial reaction to this question. I nevertheless believe this reaction to be a mistaken one.

Nss consist of sets of statements. On the assumption, then, that our argument against narrative reductionism has been conclusive, it is certainly true that Nss are "something" more than just conjunctions of statements. However, in so far as a cognitive connection between Nss and historical reality can be claimed, this connection is always channelled through the statements contained in a Ns. We shall see in the next chapter that what makes a Ns *more* than a mere conjunction of statements is embodied in the "point of view" on the past proposed in the narratio and from which we are invited to look upon historical reality. Although such "points of view" are, of course, partially determined by the nature of historical reality itself, they do not *refer* to historical reality. Speaking metaphorically, indicating a point of view is not "sending the reader *back* to reality" (which is the essence of all acts of reference) but, on the contrary, it is a "drawing the reader *out* of it". As a consequence the question as to whether Nss refer can ultimately be reduced to the question as to whether statements on historical reality refer (n.b. not *parts* of statements, but *complete* statements).

This problem has already attracted the attention of philosophers, even though they have mostly considered the problem of the reference of sentences and not of propositions (or of statements). According to a well-known view of Frege (which was later also defended by A. Church) truth and falsity are what sentences refer to. Frege believed that just like proper names, sentences have both a meaning (the proposition expressed by the sentence) and a reference (truth or falsity). If Gale is right[21] the motive behind this curious terminology was Frege's intention to develop an extensional logic. What exactly Frege's arguments were need not

21. R.M. Gale, Propositions, judgments, sentences and statements, in P. Edwards ed., *The encyclopedia of philosophy,* Vol 6, London 1967; p. 501.

bother us in the present context. It is more relevant to note that Frege studied the reference of sentences while we are interested in the reference of statements. But even if we skip this difficulty Frege's suggestion as to what sentences refer to can be of little use to us. I will not enter into a discussion of the objections to Frege's proposal that have already been brought up (e.g. by Dum-mett)[22], but restrict myself to pointing out that *if* we were to accept Frege's position, all acceptable Nss, whatever their differences may be, would refer to one and the same thing, i.e. truth. I have no idea how to interpret such a suggestion. It looks more like a novel way of speaking than like a sensible answer to a sensible question. One may wonder if the word "refer" really has the same meaning here as it usually has.

Ordinarily, the word "refer" is used to indicate a specific relationship between language and reality. This is a more promising approach. Initially we are inclined to associate referential capacity exclusively with the subject-term in statements like "Mary cuts the red rose". An individual person is here referred to by the proper name "Mary", while the predicate "cuts the red rose" attributes to this person a specific kind of action, i.e. cutting the red rose. So apparently in the more typical case the subject-term of a statement refers, while its predicate-term attributes something to the thing referred to. From this point of view, then, the task of establishing which utterances refer is identical with the task of finding which utterances can be subject-terms of statements. And this would imply that, whatever we may discover in this connection, Nss will never refer because (sets of) statements (i.e. Nss) are not subject-terms of statements. It should be noted that the obvious objection that Nss *can* be subject-terms in statements — take, e.g., "N_1 is p" — results from confusing of names of Nss (e.g. "N_1 ") with what these names refer to (i.e. Nss themselves).

But why should we impose such restrictions on the referential capacity of phrases? Would it be wrong to say that the phrase "the red rose" refers? Surely, a particular thing is introduced into language when it is uttered. The same goes for the verb "cuts". It can even be plausibly argued that the word "red" refers, because it makes "reference to a feature"[23]. Together with Mooij, we can conclude from these considerations that we should use "a generic notion of reference of which reference to an object and reference to a feature are special variants"[24]. As a result of this strategy, the notion of reference gets a very wide application. Only terms mentioning non-existent things or words expressing relational predicates like "after" or "greater than" would probably be somewhat troublesome. And maybe even such terms could be said to refer if only the notion of reference were to be made so wide as to

22. M. Dummett, Truth, in P.P. Strawson, *Philosophical logic,* Oxford 1973; pp. 49 ff..
23. This proposal has been made by Srzednicki; see Mooij; p. 41.
24. Mooij; pp. 41-2.

include also “references” to those features of reality “created” by the linguistic instruments we have at our disposal. Thus, “the not being present of a certain thing in reality” might be accepted as a feature of reality we (can) refer to with the word “x” when we say “x does not exist”. Anyway, if it is not irrational to make the notion of reference so capacious, one may, indeed, wonder why complete statements could not be said to refer. And a very obvious candidate for serving as a referent presents itself: i.e. the event. What is wrong with looking at the event of Mary cutting the red rose as an identifiable individual thing you can refer to? Surely, from such a point of view, it seems reasonable to suppose that statements as such can refer.

However, difficulties will soon arise. Take the statement “in 1670 Louis XIV and Charles II concluded the secret treaty of Dover” (by means of this treaty both monarchs intended to achieve the downfall of the Dutch Republic). As an individual thing the event referred to behaves most irregularly. If we have the relevant information at our disposal we can always find out whether some properties are rightly or wrongly attributed to a particular individual thing we refer to *in* statements. However, in the case of the event of the Dover treaty, we are placed in an awkward dilemma. Do the facts that the treaty was concluded in a certain room and that it was written on a specific piece of paper form part of the event or not? These facts are not explicitly mentioned in the statement, so it seems they do not. On the other hand, they are undoubtedly aspects of the event itself. So should we reject a description of the conclusion of the Dover treaty containing incorrect information about the room in which the treaty was concluded as a false description of the event or not? It looks as if statements mentioning events have a “soft underbelly” just like narratios (see Chapter III, section (4)). And if we are right in saying that statements, in contrast to the names of Nss, do not have a referential capacity, we could propose to say that the statement on the Dover treaty is the name of a statement contained in a Ns that has this statement as its unique property. In this sense the statement (as the name of a Ns) can be said to *refer* to itself (as a Ns). And, actually, this is how, in my opinion, the reference of statements should be understood. Thus, at least part of what is said on narratios in this book will also hold for statements on events. That is to say, the narratio has certain repercussions on the statement on an event. The difference between states of affairs and events runs parallel to that between the statement interpreted as a statement on reality and the statement when seen as the proper name of a Ns that has this statement as its unique property. This difference therefore has nothing to do with an intrinsic or material difference between states of affairs and events as such, but applies only to the way in which we tend to interpret the statements expressing them. If a statement is a natural component of a narratio we shall see it as a statement on an event; if the statement is more self-sufficient it will be said to describe a state of affairs.

However, our problem is the reference of statements and not their

names so let us return to the question as to whether the statement on the treaty of Dover can be taken to refer. If we say that this statement as such does refer there are two possibilities: 1) what the statement refers to is the sum of what the individual components of the statement refer to, 2) what the statement refers to is different from this sum. If one prefers the first option it seems odd to maintain that statements as such should refer. Indeed, one can say that each individual Dutchman pays his taxes or that the Dutch nation pays its taxes. But fortunately even in Holland taxes are paid only once and not twice. Similarly, one cannot say that the statements as such refer as well as the individual components of the statements, if, at least, this were to mean that *both* the statements and its constituent parts have their specific referential task to perform. So let us consider the second option. Here we may ask what the difference is between what the statement as such refers to and what the individual components of the statement, when taken together, refer to. Or, in other words, in what respect does an event (i.e. what a statement is supposed to refer to) differ from the persons, actions and so on (i.e. what the components of the statement refer to) involved in the invent? I am afraid that this question, can only, if at all, be answered after spending a great deal of scholastic application on preliminary problems. For instance, what exactly do we do when we add up referents? Can such additions form new referents? The list of these curious questions can be expanded at will.

So let us try to approach the problem of the eventual reference of statements to events in another way. Let us once more consider the statement on the Dover treaty of 1670 mentioned above. We can describe this event in more than one way: e.g. “in 1670 Louis XIV and Charles II appended their signatures to the Dover treaty” (1), or “in 1670 Louis XIV succeeded in completely destroying the political position of the Dutch Republic” (2). Certainly (1) and (2) refer to the same event, if statements can be said to refer. Next, if two phrases have the same referent they are interchangeable *salva veritate*. Obviously, this is not the case here: “x believes that (1)” does not permit us to conclude that “x believes that (2)”. But even if we leave non-extensional contexts out of consideration, substitution continues to cause trouble. For, certainly, what is referred to by the second description is the consequence of what is referred to in the first description — if it is assumed that statements can refer to events. Such absurd conclusions can only be avoided if we deny statements the capacity to refer. It should be noted that scientific statements can cause the same kind of trouble. The same state of affairs can be described by statement 1) an electric current goes from A to B as well as by statement 2) electrons move from B to A, while it does not seem inappropriate to assert that what 2) refers to is the cause of what 1) refers to. Nevertheless, the causal relationship between 1) and 2) is less obvious in this case because here it is relatively hard to separate both descriptions. We can easily imagine that Louis XIV and Charles II succeeded in destroying the political position of the

Republic by *other* means than the Dover treaty. However, it is precisely the scientific knowledge enabling us to assert the equivalence of the statements 1) and 2) on the electrical current that effectively prevents us from separating the two statements. The explanation is probably that the differences between descriptions given by historians of what is still felt to be the same event may be of a more dramatic nature than in the case of scientific descriptions. Therefore in history an event can be described in ways so dissimilar that a causal relationship between what two of its descriptions refer to can be argued for.

If the statements contained in a Ns do not refer, Nss cannot be said to refer either. As far as historical reality is concerned a Ns can have no fewer and no more objects of reference than its statements, namely none. It may seem rather odd that Nss like "the Renaissance" or "the (a) state" should have no referents in historical reality, but we cannot decide otherwise. An example may be helpful. Consider the Ns "Mannerism" that was introduced in the early part of this century by historians of art such Riegl, Dvorák and Pevsner in order to obtain a more refined interpretation of the transition from Renaissance to Baroque painting and sculpture (I will not go into the differences between the Nss proposed by each individual historian of art).[25] The proposal to discern a "Mannerist" phase in Italian 16th century painting is, of course, quite unlike the discovery of Pluto by Tombaugh in 1930 or the discovery of electromagnetism by Oersted. This already suggests that whereas there really *is* a planet Pluto or a physical phenomenon to be called "electromagnetism" one should not believe historical reality to contain something we may refer to with the help of a Ns to be called "Mannerism". If a future historian of art were to declare that there was no "Mannerist" phase in 16th century Italian art he would not be accused of being either blind or joking. And this would happen without doubt to somebody who denied the existence of e.g. electromagnetical phenomena. We can just *see* that a compass-needle reacts to an electric current that comes close to it. Although physicists may differ with regard to the correct explanation of this phenomenon, the phenomenon itself cannot reasonably be denied. The fact that our observation of physical reality depends to some extent on what (physical) theories we use in describing it should not entice us to defend a similar thesis for historiography. Whoever adheres to some physical theory has a very precise idea of what physical phenomena the theory is about (if not, he simply doesn't understand the theory). On the other hand, historiographical discussions on e.g. the Renaissance are exclusively concerned with the question as to what uses can be made of the term "the Renaissance" in order to understand historical reality. Or, to put it differently, that which is a simple requirement for merely understanding a physical theory is what historians, in *their* approach to (historical) reality, always disagree about. Where the exact sciences begin, i.e. with having an idea of how terms relate (refer) to reality, is precisely where historiography ends (here I would

25. See F. Baumgart, *Renaissance und Kunst des Manierismus*, Köln 1963.

like to call to mind what was said on pp. 91 ff.). Once more every attempt to see similarities between the exact sciences and historiography should be mistrusted: such similarities *may,* indeed, exist, but they should always be argued for from a vantage point that presupposes no such similarities. I would now like to revert to what was said in Chapter V, section (4). If Nss referred to historical reality, historical discussion would be useless. If Nss referred to specific "things" in historical reality, historiographical discussion would, considering the very concrete and a-theoretical language historians employ, amount to little more than an appeal to what our ears can hear and what our eyes can see. Here I should like to call to mind what was argued for in Chapter V, section (3). Discussions on whether we should or should not use the concept "Mannerism" are not concerned with the presence or the absence of a certain "thing" we can refer to in the past: how could we possibly fail to see such a "big" thing? Ayer once attacked "the belief that what can be shown can also be said"[26]; whoever thinks that Nss refer commits himself to the converse of this fallacy, i.e. the belief that what can be spoken about can also be shown. But although we can meaningfully discuss Mannerism, Mannerism can never be shown.

If anything, Mannerism is *a way of looking* at the paintings of Rosso Fiorentino, Pontormo or Parmigianino but it is not these paintings themselves or even only aspects of them. Indicating or referring to specific paintings of Parmigianino or their characteristics can never show what Mannerism is, but can only clarify an intention without being such an intention itself; here acts of reference are like quotations in an unknown language — apparently someone wants to convey a particular meaning to us but we lack the instruments necessary to discover it. Only statements can bridge this gap. I know we feel a strong intuitive resistance to the assertion that Nss do not refer: surely Mannerism must have *something* to do with the paintings of Pontormo or Parmigianino, otherwise we could just as well locate Mannerisnyn the days of Charlemagne. However, what the *word* Mannerism refers to is to *statements* on these paintings and these statements do not refer to those paintings (or anything else), although the *components* of these statements do. Therefore, we should overcome our intuitive resistance and avoid postulating things in historical reality that correspond to terms like "Mannerism", "the Cold War", "the (a) state" and so on. Curiously enough, narrative realism (the position that induces us to postulate such entities in the historical past) is more idealistic in this respect, more inclined to assume that things correspond to words, than narrative idealism. However, no identifiable objects correspond to most of the terms we use for discussing the past. Whether these terms refer to a Ns or are sortal concepts is decisive. Thus, in so far as the term "the fall of the Roman Empire" refers to a Ns we can agree with Munz when he writes: "there is no sense in imaging that there was such a *thing* as the fall of the Roman Empire and then examine whether Gibbon's or Rostovtzeff's or Seeck's explanation is the right one (...). Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and

26. Ayer (1); p. 54.

Rostovtzeff's story are not two attempts to depict one and the same event, but are two completely different historical narratives. There is not one set of events with two different causal explanations, but two narratives of sets of events"[27]. Indeed, there is no such thing as the "Fall of the Roman Empire" — to mention only one problem: *when* did the Roman Empire fall? In 395 AD when the Empire was divided into two halves, in 476 when Romulus Augustulus was deposed by Odoacer, when the Empire became Christian or when the urban middle class, the so-called "curi-ales", disappeared? Or did the Roman Empire only fall on that fateful morning of 30th May 1453 when Mohammed II stormed the walls of Constantinople? Causes of the decline, symptoms of the decline and the decline and fall itself of the Empire have become indistinguishable in the historiographical discussions on this famous topic. And this is typical of historical argument. Every attempt to "remedy" this state of affairs would require a formalism quite alien to historical method.

All the answers I have just mentioned have been defended by historians in the course of time. I am quite convinced that reasonable things can be said on the relative plausibility of all these answers but we cannot decide on this matter by simply inspecting an object known to everybody as the "Fall of the Roman Empire" and then ascertaining at what point of time or in what period this object came into existence. Nss are not "shorthand" (as the adherents of speculative philosophies of history and the protagonists of "history as a social science" wish to maintain) enabling us to speak about things in historical reality: the past itself knows no "Falls of the Roman Empire", no "Renaissance", no "social classes", no "states" - in contrast to the objects of our ordinary world, these "things" lead their lives exclusively in the narrativist universe. And this narrativist universe has a remarkable degree of autonomy: at least, what it contains are by no means simple projections or pictures of the historical past itself.

If, then, Nss do not refer it may well be wondered how reference to real things actually *is* achieved. How does reference to things fit in the picture given in the preceding section dealing with how individual things come to be recognized in reality? In answering this question I will restrict myself to the most elementary cases in which reference is made to things in reality: i.e. those cases where the subject-term of a statement refers to a certain individual thing. I trust that more complicated ways of referring to reality can ultimately be reduced to these cases - and should this hope turn out to be unfounded I do not believe that we are confronted with a problem that is peculiar to narrativist philosophy.

In the previous section it was argued that intensional typification and *only* intensional typification of Nss will permit us to speak of instances of (types of) things in extra-linguistic reality. Suppose now we have a Ns N_1 of an intensional type T that contains the statements p, q, ... not belonging to the set of statements of N_1 defined by T. A "T"

27. Munz (l); p. 122.

will be a Ns of type T, a "t" will be an instance of the class of things denoted by the type-concept which corresponds to the intensional type of Nss T; furthermore, the statements p, q, ..., expressing the presence of reality of the qualities P, Q, ... should, of course, all be formulated in such a way that no (types of) individual things are presupposed by them. However, if the qualities P, Q, ... happen to be attributed to some individual thing of the type T, the corresponding attributes a, b, ... are predicated of the subject-term referring to that individual t. If we bear all this in mind, we can say that the statements of N_1 entail the following statement S: "some specific t is a, b, ...". S is analytical: S's being entailed by N_1 implies that the t to which the subject-term of S refers is actually a, b, ... Thus the subject-term of S, i.e. "a specific t" refers to a certain t. Consequently, S is a statement in which reference is made to a unique individual thing in extra-linguistic reality by means of its subject-term. This analysis shows how from Nss and the statements contained in them (which do not refer to individual things either as a whole or in so far as their component parts are concerned), statements can be derived whose subject-terms refer to individual things in reality. And if there are more t's which are a, b, ... this does not prevent S's subject-term from referring to a unique individual thing, although S's descriptions of this thing need not be an identifying description of it. For the statement S', "some t's are a, b, ..." cannot be derived from the statements contained in N_1.

When discussing the reference of Nss there is a last problem that requires our attention. In historical studies we sometimes find statements like "the Renaissance is p", or "the Cold War is q" and so on. We can look at such statements in two ways. Firstly, in some cases these statements may reasonably be regarded as redundant and as expressing no more than just "p" or "q". For when we come across statements like "p" or "q" we should always read them as "N_1 is p", "N_1 is q" in order to define their narrative meaning, because from the narrativist point of view the statements of a narratio are statements on Nss. However, when a historian writes "the Renaissance is p" instead of just "p" he only wants to emphasize that "p" really is part of his Ns on the Renaissance. Here we shall not meet with any difficulties: the subject-term of these statements refers to some specific Ns and the statement as a whole is analytically true. Here everything is in accord with what has been said up till now on Nss. But, in some other cases we may be confronted with statements on Nss that to all appearances are not trivially reducible to the statements contained in a particular Ns. And then difficulties will arise. For instance, after reading Gaddis' book on the origins of the Cold War we could say: "after all, the revisionist account of the Cold War (i.e. a specific Ns) has not proved to be a reasonable assessment of political history since, say, 1941"[28]. Of course, this is a statement of the form

28. J.L. Gaddis, *The United States and the origins of the Cold War,* New York 1972. For a short synopsis of Caddis's views see pp. 358-361.

"this Ns is p". Generally speaking, historiographical discussions will often yield this kind of pronouncement on Nss. From this example it will be obvious that such statements are never — and certainly not trivially — reducible to the statements contained by some Ns: no historical account will condemn itself as an unreasonable assessment of the past. Nevertheless, being a statement on some Ns such a statement *could* be said to be a property of Nss.

However, if we are ready to accept this kind of property of Nss we will, no doubt, come into conflict with the assertion made in section (1) of this chapter, viz. that only the statements *contained* in a Ns can be seen as the properties of a Ns. I strongly object to the proposal to consider the kind of statement under discussion here as additional properties of Nss: accepting them as properties of Nss would result in confusing disastrously the level of speaking on the past with the level of the discussion of *views* on the past. Such a confusion would raise a dust in which all clarity, which is so hard to obtain in the first place in an analysis of historiography, would be lost again. Moreover, if we were to accept this kind of statement as properties of Nss we could never be sure whether a Ns does possess a certain property or not — and that is not what the relation between things and their properties should be. For historigraphical discussion is always concerned with the question of whether instances of this kind of statement are acceptable or not. We can only believe such statements to express a property of Nss if we take some given state of historiographical discussion as an absolute. And that would, again, be tantamount to denying the whole *raison d'être* of the writing of history. Therefore, I propose to consider the kind of statements under discussion here not as statements on Nss ascribing a certain property to these Nss but as statements on our opinions on the merits of certain Nss. And such opinions cannot be seen as properties of Nss themselves. Similarly, it would be odd to say that the opinions people have of us form part of our characteristics.

Lastly, we should consider statements such as "England went down-hill in the period after the second World War" or "liberal-conservatism was the best answer to the threat of totalitarianism in the first half of the 20th century". Pessimistic narratios have been written on England since 1945, similarly Nss have been proposed (e.g. by J.L. Talmon in his recent and monumental *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution*[29]) on the disastrous victory of political extremism in the first half of this century. It is to such Nss we refer when making statements like "England went down-hill in the period after the second World War". Such statements should therefore be interpreted as follows: 1) there is a Ns that is, roughly, such and such, 2) this Ns is an acceptable assessment of part of the past. So not reality but Nss are referred to by this kind of statement

29. I gave an assessment of the whole of Talmon's historiographical oeuvre in F.R. Ankersmit, Jakob Talmon en de totalitaire staat, A.H. Huussen ed., *Historici van de 20e eeuw,* Utrecht 1981.

and this is done with the help of a very sketchy individuation procedure. Many statements in ordinary and historiographical language are of this type. These statements being statements on Nss are all analytically true. Of course, the corresponding Nss themselves cannot be said to be either true or false, as we have seen in the conclusion to Chapter IV.

(4) *Narrative substances and identity.* In the foregoing discussions we have spoken repeatedly about the identity of Nss and we have discovered how Nss can be individuated. It seems reasonable to suppose that these discussions should have some bearing upon the problem of the identity of things: when change is investigated the concept "identity of things" is often resorted to and in Chapter V we saw that Nss are a prerequisite for the possibility of describing change. Thus, we may put the question: can we derive from narrativist philosophy a specific view on the meaning of the concept "the identity of x" (where "x" refers to a particular individual)? I will start with an analysis of "personal identity". Unfortunately, I must leave the concept "personal identity" undefined at the present stage, because the various positions taken up in this old controversy could be looked upon as elaborations of different definitions of this concept. The acceptance of a particular definition would prejudge the matter we have to decide upon here. So, for the time being, the concept may be interpreted in an un-philosophical, common-sensical way. It may seem strange to start an analysis of the concept "the identity of x" with a discussion of *personal* identity, because that is the most problematic use of the concept. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for this apparently inverse order in our argument: we shall see that "personal identity" logically precedes other uses of the concept "the identity of x".

So what do we mean by "my (or your) personal identity". Current debate on identity suggests two answers. Firstly, it is argued that the statement "a is identical with (or is the same) as b" should be read as "a is the same f as b",[30] where "f" denotes a general concept. When we speak of "personal identity" "f" could be the concept "human being" or something more specific like "Dutchman" or "historian". This is the so-called D-thesis. Secondly, the D-thesis is accepted, albeit with the proviso that there may be another concept "g" for which the statement "a is the same g as b" is untrue. This is the so-called R-thesis. With regard to personal identity the R-thesis seems the more plausible option: I shall remain the same human being all my life, but I could very well give up Dutch nationality and become an American citizen.[31] Furthermore, both the D-thesis and the R-thesis require certain criteria of identity so as to establish on what terms we are allowed to say that something is the same f or the same g as something else. Consequently, as has already been noted by adherents of the D-thesis and the R-thesis, all the logical weight of identity-statements comes to rest on these criteria of identity.[32]

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30. Cf. p. 126.
31. For Wiggins's criticism of the R-thesis see Wiggins (2), esp. Chapter I.
32. Cf. pp. 128.

Let us now take a closer look at these criteria of *personal* identity. An obvious, although rather naive course would be to rely on the way individual human beings are actually (re-)identified by police- or customs-officers, i.e. by investigation of fingerprints. Thus, if the R-thesis is accepted, the statement that "x_1 is identical with x_2" (where "x_1" and "x_2" refer to individual human beings) is equivalent to saying "x_1 is the same f (e.g. human being) as x_2" (1), "it is possible that x_1 is not the same g as x_2" (if, for instance, "g" denotes the concept "nationality") (2), while (1) implies "x_1 is the same c as x_2" (3), where "c" denotes the property of having fingerprints of a certain type.

Although we shall find later on that there is some truth in this picture of personal identity, it should be pointed out that this proposal for an analysis of personal identity as it stands is going to meet with a number of difficulties. First, we may doubt the reliability of fingerprints as a criterion of personal identity: it is conceivable that somebody's fingertips will be transplanted onto some other human being. But maybe this difficulty can be removed by turning to better criteria of identity. In fact, philosophers have never associated these criteria with fingerprints but always with bodily continuity, (continuity of) memory and so on. However, even these better criteria seem to get entangled in difficulties peculiar to each of them. I will not enter into this rather fruitless discussion on criteria of personal identity, but will suppose, for argument's sake, that a more eligible candidate "C" has been discovered. Even then we are confronted with a second difficulty. There is something wrong with the statements (1), (2) and (3). They all contain the word "same" and that is precisely the word we are trying to explain here: it will be obvious that the concept "same" largely covers the meaning of the concept "identity". For what does the conceptual difference between the adjectives "identical" and "same" consist in? It may be hard to eliminate the word "same" from (1) and (2). However, there may be a solution to this problem. We can place all the logical weight of the analysis on statement (3) implied by (1); and this would be in harmony with suggestions of the adherents of the D-thesis and the R-thesis themselves. The rationale for this move is, that it seems likely that the word "same" can be eliminated from (3) and that the vicious circle in our reasoning could thus be avoided.

The statement "x_1 is the same c as x_2" can be re-written as follows: "x_1 is C_1 and x_2 is C_1", where "C_1" is a particular property of x_1 and x_2 that is defined by the criteria of identity "C" associated with things of the type c. C_1 may denote either the property of having fingerprints of a certain type, or that of being part of a specific spatiotemporal worm (then C_1 corresponds to the criterion of personal identity or bodily continuity) or that of being part of some specific sequence of memories and/or experiences (then C_1 corresponds to the memory criterion of personal identity). It may seem, then, that the concept "same-(ness)", "identity", "identical" or synonymous variants have been eliminated from our analysis of personal identity. However, we can only claim the truth of

"x_1 is C_1 and x_2 is C_1" if we know what it means for two persons to have a specific property in common. So we are caught in a third trap: apparently we have merely shifted our problem from the identity or sameness of two persons to that of the sameness of properties of persons. And all the difficulties we encountered in our analysis of the identity of persons (or things) will now reappear in connection with the problem of the identity or sameness of properties. The phrase "... is C_1" denotes a general predicate for whose correct application we need, once more, criteria for sameness. And so we can go on without ever getting rid of the concept "same-(ness)", "identity" or related notions. In my opinion the explanation for this sorry state of affairs is that the concepts of "identity", "sameness" and so on, *if they are interpreted as they have been here,* belong to a very peculiar class of concepts — a class that also contains such a concept as "value" and, perhaps, "truth". The trouble with this kind of concept is that the application of the criteria for their correct use presupposes a knowledge of these concepts, because the meaning of the concept "criterion" is part of the meaning of these concepts, or vice versa. We should not be too astonished when we find ourselves helpless in such situations. This argument adds to the cogency of the thesis defended in Chapter V, section (6), that when we try to define "identity" little help can be expected from an analysis couched in terms of criteria of identity. This thesis can be seen, from the present point of view, as a third objection to the analysis of the concept of personal identity discussed here.

However, there is a fourth objection that seems to me the most fundamental one. Up till now we have discussed personal identity in the hope of getting a reasonable answer to the question of what we mean when we say that a particular person (e.g. myself) is the same as some other person (e.g. myself in the past or in the future). But sometimes personal identity is discussed in a quite different context. It is often said that there is a peculiar "unity of perception and/or feeling" that pervades all our successive experiences and states of conciousness. We feel that our personal identity makes us into the unique human being we are; nevertheless it is very hard to express what this uniqueness and this unity that ties all our experiences together precisely consists in. The all-pervasive vagueness of this sense of personal identity may easily convince us to dismiss the notion as some psychological delusion without philosophical implications. On the other hand, the very unclarity and mysteriousness of this sense of personal identity should challenge the philosopher to investigate precisely *this* notion of personal identity. It might even be hoped that the *two* notions of personal identity (i.e. the one we have explored in the foregoing paragraphs and the one I have just referred to) are, in some way or another, intrinsically related. Perhaps, then, an investigation of the second interpretation of the concept of personal identity will shed some light on the first interpretation and remove some of the difficulties we encountered there. Anyway, that the two interpretations of the concepts of personal identity are different cannot

reasonably be doubted: the approach suggested by the first interpretation is, speaking metaphorically, "externalist" — one looks at a person, myself for instance, from the outside, as it were. And we may then wonder what *justifies* my saying, but *after* I have already said it, that this and that person (e.g. myself at different phases in my life) really are one and the same person. The approach suggested by the second interpretation could be indicated as "internalist": the question is what *makes* me say that I am one and the same person throughout my whole life?

I agree with H.D. Lewis and G. Vesey that we should take care to keep the externalist and the internalist approaches apart. Getting them confused is largely responsible for the fogs that obscure the notion of personal identity. Thus Lewis writes "there are two major senses of selfidentity. There is in the first place the sense of self-identity which I have described as the most radical or basic one. This is the sense in which one knows oneself as one ultimate indivisible being in the course of having any experience whatsoever. I know myself now as one being who just could not be any other. The question of my being or becoming some other person just could not arise, I am myself whatever my experience is like. But there is also a sense in which I am continually subject to change. Every instant I change; a moment ago I was the person who was looking at this tree, I am now looking at the lawn (...). In terms of what I undergo or experience or do I am never the same person"[33]. Vesey accepts Lewis' dichotomy of the two senses of personal identity. He notes that there is a sense in which the word "I" is used where it does not refer to a particular person (i.e. myself) that can be identified by his having a number of specific properties. In this sense of the word "I" I could say "it's me, whoever I am." On the other hand, there is a use of the phrase "it's me" that is meant to indicate that I am not some other person[34]. Having noted these two senses of the word "I" Vesey distinguishes "selfidentity" from "personal identity" — the former term refers to the "radical" (Lewis) or "internalist" interpretation of identity, whereas the second term indicates the "externalist" interpretation. From now on I will conform to Vesey's terminology. Moreover, I will distinguish between "I_{int}" and "I_{ext}"' the first term referring to the internalist use of "I" and the second one to the externalist use. It will be obvious that the term "I_{int}" can only be used by *me* in statements on myself. Applying this terminology, we can state that in recent philosophical discussion personal identity has received much more attention than selfidentity. This fact can be explained by our habit of first attending to the more manageable problems before we summon our courage to attack what seems more complicated. And certainly externalism is a much clearer and less hazardous way of dealing with identity than internalism. Internalism may be suspected of being an inextricable muddle of

33. Lewis; p. 239.
34. Vesey; p. 31.

psychological, epistemological[35] and logical questions. Nevertheless, although I will be the first to concede the mysterious and elusive character of selfidentity, I am surprised to find that even authors like Lewis and Vesey have been content to *claim* only the internalist use of the word "I" without seriously attempting to offer us an *explanation* or a *justification* of this use. Moreover, they did not ask themselves what relation obtains between "I_{int}" and "I_{ext}"; a question that can be expected to give a solution to the problems caused by a purely externalist approach to identity.

The concept of selfidentity denotes the uniqueness and the unity that characterizes and pervades all my experiences; it is the logical entity that, somehow, ensures that all *my* experiences and states of consciousness are really mine and not either partly or totally somebody else's. Thanks to this logical entity, i.e. the concept "I_{int}", all the experiences I *come* to see as my experiences are effectively attributed to *me,* whatever these experiences may have been or will be. In other words, "I_{int}" is the logical entity required for the possibility of describing the (historical) change I undergo during (phases of) my life, where "change" is defined in terms of the experiences and perceptions I have of what I *come* to see as myself. Thus, with a view to what was argued for in Chapter V, section (6), we can conclude that the concept "I_{int}" is my subject of change. Consequently, the word "I_{int}" when used by me, refers to a Ns I have formed on myself. The statements of this Ns express the experiences or the perceptions I come to see as mine. The number of these statements may be large or small, or even, in the case of a complete amnesia, shrink to nothing but merely a readiness to collect *from now on* statements within a Ns, to be referred to as "I_{int}". In fact, the readiness to collect statements within the Ns "I_{int}" is always inherent in the use of the word "I_{int}".

Selfidentity is a narrative concept: "I_{int}" refers to a certain Ns. In using the word "I_{int}" I do not refer to myself because Nss do not refer to extra-linguistic entities. In so far as "I_{int}" can be said to refer it refers

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35. The notion "I_{int}" that will be proposed here, bears some superficial resemblance to Kant's and Wittgenstein's "transcendental ego", since no empirical truths can be asserted about either of these notions. Kant describes his transcendental subject in the following way: "durch dieses Ich oder Er, oder Es (das Ding), welches denkt, wird nun nichts weiter, als ein transzendentales Subjekt der Gedanken vorgestellt = x (...), und wovon wir, abgesondert, niemals den mindesten Begriff haben konnen; um welches wir uns daher in einem bestandigen Zirkel herumdrehen, indem wir uns seiner Vorstellung jederzeit schon bedienen müssen, um irgend etwas von ihm zu urteilen"; see I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft,* Hamburg 1956 (Felix Meiner Verlag); p. 374. Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractates logico-philosophicus,* Frankfurt am Main s.a.; section (5.632): "das Subjekt gehört nicht zur Welt, sondern es ist eine Grenze der Welt". However, both Kant and Wittgenstein are speaking epistemologically, while we are considering the issue from the point of view of philosophical logic.

to statements that express my experiences, perceptions or states of consciousness. The peculiarly "elusive" character of self-identity arises from the little-recognized fact that the (narrative) subject of my experiences is not part of this world but of a narrativist universe. Selfidentity is not situated in a property or properties of mine that remain unchanged during my life or in bodily continuity or a continuity of memory or consciousness, but in my having fused statements on my experiences into the Ns we call "I_{int}" and/or in my readiness to add new statements to this set of statements. However, continuity of experience, consciousness or memory can be explained by the narrativist analysis of the concept "I_{int}": everything that is and will be attributed to this Ns "I_{int}" is the property of *this* very specific and unique Ns. Because there is no obvious reason to catalogue these attributes as either spatiotemporal or otherwise, it can be claimed that there is not sufficient justification for the mind-body dichotomy from the perspective of the present analysis of selfidentity. Thus it is a linguistic entity (i.e. the Ns "I_{int}"), and not parts or aspects of myself that makes me the same individual at different stages in my life. Even the fact that I have certain memories does not explain selfidentity, for these memories are expressed *in* statements and not *by* statements (i.e. a Ns).

The unity of *this* Ns "I_{int}" explains the intuition of continuity we associate with the stream of our experiences, states of consciousness and so on. Individual statements on my experiences can be derived analytically from the complete notion of "I_{int}", whatever these experiences have been or will be. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Ns "I_{int}" refers to a history I have constructed on myself. This history will change continually. Most human beings have no fixed ideas about their past; moreover, every month and every year adds a new chapter to the history of our lives. The *term* "I_{int}", if it does not refer to a specific interpretation I have of my history, is the scene in which these changes are enacted. In the latter case we may agree with Vesey's comparison of the word "I_{int}" with the word "here". I can say with absolute certainty "I am I, whoever I am" — even if I have forgotten all about myself up to the point of not knowing that I am a specimen of the human race; similarly, I can say with absolute certainty "here is here (or I am here), wherever that may be". Yet in neither case is the term "I_{int}" or "here" redundant. Although these terms do not specify a history or a place, such specifications only become possible after we have learned to use them. They convey no knowledge, but permit us to arrange our knowledge. And they do so by providing us with an initial "point of view"; they offer us a frame of reference that is not itself part of a more fundamental frame of reference. But we may and probably should change these "points of view" continually.

From these considerations it may well be concluded that selfidentity is a more fundamental notion than the concept of personal identity.

I can only recognize myself as an *individual thing* possessing unique characteristics after I have constructed and intensionally typified a number of other Nss. Knowing that I_{int} am I_{int} does not yet imply that I know myself to be an individual thing of a certain type (i.e. human being) with some specific characteristics. That there is an individual thing in reality corresponding to *some* Ns, and more particularly to the Ns "I_{int}" depends on the outcome of typification-procedures. For the sake of order it should be noted that the exact meaning of the *passe-partout* term "corresponds" is, of course, determined by what has been argued for in the sections (3) and (4) of this chapter. Just using the word "I" need not always imply that an individual is referred to, neither does the word "the Renaissance" refer to an individual thing (of course it refers to a Ns). However, as soon as thanks to a typification-procedure individual things (e.g. individual human beings) can be recognized in reality, the (re-)iden-tification of these individual things or human beings has become possible. Not until then can the externalist approach to identity (i.e. an analysis of "I_{ext}" and of "personal identity") be conceived of. Now we can understand why a purely externalist account of identity must leave some questions unanswered. The troubles the externalist approach ran into were all connected with its unavoidable reliance on criteria of identity. And criteria of identity can never tell us what the meaning of the concept "identity" is, because they merely *reflect* what we actually happen to see as identical things (e.g. myself at different phases in my life). It was only the internalist approach to identity that acquainted us with a use of the word "I" that does not depend on criteria of identity. *This* word "I" (i.e. "I_{int}") refers to a Ns. And when other Nss have been formed and typification has taken place, reference can be made to those individual things that correspond to instances of a certain intensional type of Nss (e.g. human beings) (cf. p. 160). In this way a referential use of the word "I" comes into being. The term "I_{ext}" has been proposed for this use of "I". Criteria for the correct use of "I_{ext}" (and the same goes for the referential use of other words) are embodied in those statements contained in the Nss which have been typified intensionally and which yield the corresponding type-concept(s). This is, in a nutshell, how the non-referential and the referential use of "I" - i.e. "I_{int}" (indicating a Ns and not its name) — and "I_{ext}", or the concepts of self-identity and of personal identity are related to each other.

Consequently, statements on either "I_{int}" or "I_{ext}" have distinct logical forms despite their grammatical similarity. A statement like "I_{int} am a" is not a statement on myself but on some Ns that bears this name and has the statement "a" as one of its properties. It is an analytical truth. In a statement like I_{ext} am a" reference is made to the individual human being called F.A. and "a" is not a statement but denotes a property that is attributed to F.A.. And this is a contingent truth. But what about

statements like “a” in the statement “I_{int} am a”: “I_{int}” cannot be the subject of such statements, because a Ns cannot be the subject of one of the statements it contains. Should we conclude, then, that such statements have “I_{ext}” as their subject-term — and, if so, does this not mean that the notion of “I_{ext}” is logically prior to that of “I_{int}” (only after the formulation of statements like “a” can a Ns containing such statements be formed)? Surely this would entirely disrupt my account of selfidentity.

To solve this problem we shall have to return to what was said in section (2) on the so-called “baby view of reality”. According to this view all statements on reality should be formulated in such a way that the presence of specific (types of) individuals in reality is no longer presupposed. In conformity with the Russellian and Quinean analysis of statements the subject-term of the statement is robbed of all content so that only by means of its predicate-term the statement asserts the presence of certain qualities in reality. Thus, the baby view of reality requires us to reformulate statements on our experiences, perceptions and feelings in such a way that neither our own individuality nor the presence of other (types of) individual things is presupposed, for instance: “here and now there is a perception of pain”. A series of such statements yields a history or a Ns on me and when such a Ns has come into being I can say “$I_{(int)}$ am in pain”. The meaning of such a statement is therefore as follows: 1) “here and now there is a perception of pain” and 2) “statement 1) is part of a Ns “I_{int}””- Statements like these could be compared to those statements on e.g. the Renaissance in which the name of the Ns in question is continually repeated: e.g. “the Renaissance is p”, “the Renaissance is q” and so on, instead of just “p” or “q”. The fact that the name of the Ns in question is mentioned in each statement suggests that Nss are very conspicuously present in the case of Nss embodying selfidentity. Indeed, as we shall soon see, the Ns “I_{int}” is the most important Ns we know and, moreover, prerequisite for our very ability to recognize *other* Nss and thus for the narrative writing of history. However, even though a substantial subject-term seems very well entrenched in a statement like “I am in pain”, this should not lead us to think that such a statement should be the kind of statement *contained* in Nss: it is really a statement *on* a Ns. Therefore, the subject-term of such a statement is the name of a Ns, and not of a thing in extra-linguistic reality. Certainly, such a statement entails another statement on extra-linguistic reality, but in this latter kind of statement the subject-term has no content because the statement should be formulated in accordance with the baby view of reality. In short, statements like “I am in pain” are all statements on a Ns, hence they are analytically true and they do not refer to reality although other statements mentioning some state of affairs in reality are implied by them. The present analysis of self-identity runs parallel to a well-known argument of Wittgenstein: “when I say “I am in pain”, I do not point to a person who is in pain, since in a certain sense I

have no idea *who* is. And this can be given a justification. For the main point is: I did not say that such-and-such a person was in pain, but "I am ...". Now in saying this I don't name any person. Just as I don't name anyone when I *groan* with pain. Though someone else sees who is in pain from the groaning."

And a little later he adds: '"I" is not the name of a person, nor "here" of a place, and "this" is not a name. But they are connected with names. Names are explained by means of them. It is also true that it is characteristic of physics not to use these words'[36]. The non-referential character of the word "I" in "I am in pain" has been cleverly expounded by Wittgenstein in this argument. Nevertheless, we might like to qualify his suggestion by adding that although "I" does not refer to a person (F.A.), reference *is* made to the Ns "I_{int}"- (Wittgenstein's claim that physics does not use the words "I", "here" etc. is most remarkable in the context of our discussion. Indeed, unlike the historian or ourselves when we ponder our life-history, the physicist does not propose but elaborates "points of view".)

When statements are tied together in the Ns "I_{int}", neither my individuality nor my personal identity is presupposed, although my self-identity comes into being in that way. Therefore, the logical task performed by the Ns "I_{int}" is not to (re-)identify a human being (i.e. myself) as the same human being it was or will be, but to create my selfidentity, that is, to distinguish between myself and what is not myself. To say that all my experiences and states of consciousness are mine is to imply that they are not yours. I shall now discuss how this division of reality into what is and what is not part of myself is achieved by our use of the concept "I_{int}".

Learning to use the word "I_{int}" is like erecting a landmark in a landscape and becoming aware that the landmark is our vantage-point so that what is seen from it is not a landscape perceived from just anywhere but from a certain *point of view* (in the next chapter the concept "point of view" will be elaborated). This forces upon us a dissociation of the landmark (i.e. "I_{int}") from the landscape itself (i.e. *what* is perceived from this landmark). However, the difficulty with the landmark "I_{int}" is that it is a landmark for *all* my experiences and not just *some* of them - therefore, at first, "I_{int}" does not seem to divide the world into myself and not-myself. For why shouldn't I say that *my* experiences and states of consciousness are the whole of reality? What compels me to extract myself from the reality in which I am, initially, immersed? Here we may think of Diderot's argument: "Car après tout qu'il y ait hors de nous quelquechose ou rien, c'est toujours nous que nous apercevons. Nous sommes 1'univers entier"[37]. As long as this question has not been posed, it is true that we are helpless. Indeed, there may be a kind of awareness of reality which

36. Wittgenstein (2); sections (404) and (410).
37. D. Diderot, *Correspondance* VI, Paris 1955; p. 376.

owes its origin to the whole of perceived reality having been absorbed by what *we* would call "selfidentity". Because all my experiences and states of consciousness are mine no inconsistencies need arise her. Whoever ignores that he sees a landscape from a certain point of view may be in a state of mind *we* could best describe by saying that for him the landscape is part of himself. Again, the totality of my experiences and states of consciousness are all mine, which guards us against any inconsistencies as long as we are in this state of solipsism.

However, once the above question has been formulated we cannot seriously be in doubt as to its answer. For the very same reason that all my experiences and states of consciousness are mine, accepting this question as a reasonable question is tantamount to conceding that there must be something beyond my experiences and states of consciousness — and how could this concession possibly be falsified? To sum up, as soon as the question arises as to whether "I_{int}" devides the world into what does and what does not belong to myself, an affirmative answer must be given. As long as the question has not been asked, a solipsist position is self-consistent, which, however, does not imply a negative answer to our question, because it has not yet even been put. Demarcating between the self and what does not belong to the self is equivalent to recognizing *other* Nss besides the Ns "I_{int}". These other Nss must be different from "I_{int}" because of the applicability of Leibniz's Law of the Identity of Indiscernibles claimed in section (1) for Nss. Nevertheless, as soon as the possibility of other Nss is recognized, similarities between Nss can be conceived of and, with that, (types of) individual things remaining the same or identical with themselves through processes of change. For whoever acknowledges the difference between the Ns "I_{int}" and other Nss must also know what it is for Nss *not* to be different. Thus, *sameness* of things through change depends on *otherness* of Nss. In this way our abandoning the solipsist view of the world can explain how (types of) individual things that remain the same during change come to be recognized in reality. Lastly, I would like to point out that sameness of states of affairs (as described by the statements of Nss) was not presupposed in this argument. Descriptions of identical states of affairs occurring at different times or places may be part of a solipsistic Ns "I_{int}" and, on the other hand, I can speak as I have done here of similarities, without committing myself to a particular view as to what *makes* some Nss similar (e.g. their containing descriptions of similar states of affairs). So the possibility of sameness of things through change has been demonstrated here with the help of an argument discussing simply and solely Nss. Only in this way was it possible for us to steer clear of circularities in our argument.

I should like to emphasize that the line of demarcation between what is and what is not myself is by no means fixed or unalterable: everything depends on whether we interpret a given experience or state of consciousness as a state of ourselves or as a *signal* that some state of

affairs obtains outside ourselves. Such signals are the disclaimers of a logical or analytical relation between "I_{int}" (a Ns) and what is perceived (i.e. statements describing states of affairs in reality): the fact that I perceive something is interpreted not as a part of my own history ("I_{int}") but as part of the history of something else (another Ns). Such signals are therefore the announcers of the contingencies in our experience. How we narrativize ourselves and external reality will decide how we actually interpret our experiences and states of consciousness. This may be illustrated as follows. If "I_{int}" absorbs nearly all the statements on my experiences and states of consciousness, I can come extremely close to solipsism (nearly all reality is part of *my* history). According to Fichte such an identification of the self with the world is the highest ethical goal man can achieve. On the other hand, "I_{int}" may virtually abandon reality altogether; in that case even the pain I feel now may be interpreted by me as merely a *signal* that someone is in pain (more precisely, that there is just pain here and now). Likewise, an experience I have is merely a signal that e.g. this piece of paper is white. And if being a piece of white paper is not part of my history, why should I be the person who is in pain?[38]

In the first case the world has become my point of view on an empty world, in the second case the whole of reality (including myself) is seen from a point of view by which the capacity to see the self as opposed to reality has virtually been lost.

If I lead a solitary life it may be expected that the line of demarcation between what does and what does not belong to myself will steadily lose its stability which is usually more or less maintained, thanks to all kinds of socio-cultural and psychological "narrativization" habits I have acquired in the course of my social life. Tournier's extraordinary novel admirably illustrates how the solitary can move relatively freely between the two extremes just mentioned. Crusoe, during the solitary life he leads on his island *Esperanza,* writes in his log-book: "cette nuit, mon bras tendu hors de ma couche s'engourdit, 'meurt'. Je le saisis entre le pouce et 1'index de ma main gauche et je soulève cette chose étrangère, cette masse de chair énorme et pesante, ce lourd et gras membre d'autrui

38. Rousseau describes his having had such an experience of the self. He had been run down by a dog and regained consciousness much later: "la nuit s'avançait. J'aperçus le ciel, quelques étoiles, et un peu de verdure. Cette premiere sensation fut un moment délicieux. Je ne me sentais encore que par là. Je naissais dans cet instant à la vie, et il me semblait que je remplissais de ma légère existence tous les objets que j'apercevais. Tout entier au moment présent je ne me souvenais de rien; je n'avais nulle notion distincte de mon individu, pas la moindre idée de ce que venait de m'arriver; je ne savais ni qui j'étais ni où j'étais; je ne sentais ni mal, ni crainte, ni inquiétude. Je voyais couler mon sang comme j'aurais vu couler un ruisseau, sans songer seulement que ce sang m'appartînt en aucune sorte. Je sentais dans tout mon être un calme ravissant auquel, chaque fois que je me le rappelle, je ne trouve rien de comparable dans toute l'activité des plaisirs connus". See J.J. Rousseau, *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire,* Paris 1972; pp. 48-49.

soudé à mon corps par erreur. Je rève ainsi de manipuler tout mon cadavre, de m'émerveiller de son poids mort, de m'abîmer dans ce paradoxe: *une chose qui est moi.* (...) Depuis quelque temps en effet je m'exerce à cette opération qui consiste à arracher de moi successivement les uns après les autres tous mes attribute — je dis bien tous - comme les pelures successives d'un oignon. Ce faisant, je constitue loin de moi un individu qui a nom Crusoé, prénom Robinson, qui mesure six pieds etc. Je le vois vivre et évoluer dans l'île sans plus profiter de ses heurs, ni pâtir de ses malheurs. Qui *je?* La question est loin d'être oiseuse. Elle n'est même pas insoluble. Car si ce n'est lui, c'est donc Speranza. Il y a désormais un *je* volant qui va se poser tantôt sur l'homme, tantôt sur l'île, et qui fait de moi tour à tour l'un ou l'autre[39]. Similarly erratic behaviour of the Ns "I_{int}" has been described by Alison Lurie when she has one of the principle characters in her novel *The War between the Tates* declare "somebody's crying (...) I think it's me"[40]. Psychological disorders such as depersonalization, schizophrenia or anxieties can probably be described as uncertainties or inconsistencies in the way the Ns "I_{int}" is constructed by human beings. The result is always a loss in self-identity, a loss in clarity of the point of view from which reality is organized and acted upon. All this may help to explain the therapeutic effect of psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis attempts to eliminate the inconsistencies in the history (a Ns "I_{int}") an individual human being has constructed on himself. How the concept "narrative substance" and in particular the Ns "I_{int}" relates to the concept of (political) freedom and how it can lay the foundations of a political theory will be described in a later study.

The manner in which human beings collectively construct the Ns "I_{int}" may differ from one historical period to another. To mention an example, psycho-historians have discovered that in Classical Antiquity extraordinary feats of courage or deeds of cowardice were not seen as emanating from the individual being himself but as the result of the interference of the Gods; since Romanticism, however, extraordinary behaviour has been associated with the very core of somebody's identity. We shall find in the next chapter that this fluidity in the line of demarcation between what does and what does not belong to a certain identity (Ns) creates the logical space for the historian to perform his task. Only where identities have no fixed borders can narratios be written. Therefore, a constant awareness of this fluidity is of the utmost importance, not only to understand the concept of selfidentity but also to grasp the methods of historiography.

It is no coincidence that I just mentioned the concept of selfidentity and of the methods of historiography in the same breath. For they are very closely connected, which may well justify the ample space allotted

39. M. Tournier, *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique,* Paris 1972; pp. 88-89.
40. A. Lurie, *The war between the Tates,* Harmondsworth 1977; p. 345.

here to a discussion of selfidentity. We can truly say, and this is most essential, that conceiving of our selfidentity is our foremost historiographical enterprise and the necessary condition for the writing of history to be possible at all[41]. As we have just seen, conceiving of my selfidentity implies a division of reality into a sphere "myself and a sphere of "not myself". Only after this division has been made, does it become possible to write history; i.e. to recognize identities or Nss outside myself or "I_{int}". Tnat we are aware of having a history ourselves (selfidentity) is the logical prerequisite for all writing of history, that is, for our ability to discern "identities" (or Nss) and, possibly, at some later stage, "individualities" (i.e. intensional types of Nss) in external historical reality. Paraphrasing Leibniz we might say: "So only the self is the primary unity, the simple original substance of which all the created or derivative monads are products, and from whom they are born, so to speak, by continual fulgurations of the self from moment to moment, but limited by the receptivity of the created being, for whom it is essential to have limits[42].

This argument could be said to reveal the kernel of truth in hermeneutic theory. In a sense it is correct to say that the identities and individualities we discover in the historical past presuppose an awareness of our own (self)identity or that our knowledge of the past is essentially anthropomorphic. But we should never forget that the structural similarity between selfidentity and our knowledge of things in the historical past is entirely formal: inference from my (self)iden-tity to the identities we discern in the past is necessary for historical understanding, but should be devoid of material content. I must never project my own experiences on the entities I discover in the past, not even when I am describing human beings like myself. The pure formalism of this kind of "Einfühlung" is obvious because it enables us to write not only the history of other people but also of entities like "the Enlightenment" or "the Cold War" whose histories do not materially resemble ours. One of the mistakes in hermeneutic theory, therefore is, that it always emphasized precisely the *material* instead of the *formal* inferences from one's own experiences to those of other historical entities.

However, even though the resemblance between the constitution of my own (self)identity and the identities that can be discovered in historical reality is merely formal, important conclusions can be drawn from it. Just as no empirical proof can be given of what my own (self) identity is like (only the nature of an individual thing of a certain type can be

41. This insight was already formulated by Hegel: "der Geschichte, wie der Prosa überhaupt, sind daher nur Völker fähig, die dazu gekommen sind und davon ausgehen, dass die Individuen sich als für sich seiend, rnit Selbstbewusstsein erfassen". See G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte. Band Π-IV. Die oriëntalische Welt. Die griechische und die römische Welt. Die germanische Welt,* Hamburg 1976 (1st ed. 1919) (Felix Meiner Verlag); p. 357.
42. Cf. Leibniz (2); p. 647.

established empirically), this cannot be done either for the identities or Nss recognized in the historical past. The identities or Nss discussed by historians, "the Renaissance", "the Cold War" and so on, are constructed or postulated, but have not been discovered in the historical past. We shall find in the past those identities or Nss (n.b. not "individualities" - where the term "individuality" is taken to indicate the notion of an individual thing of a certain type) only because we *decide* to look at the historical past from a certain point of view. This may be clarified by the following example. The History Department of Groningen University has formed a research-group which is studying the development of Dutch governmental bureaucracy since the Middle Ages. In the context of this investigation the history of the civil servant has to be written. Tracing this history back from the 20th century we shall not find it hard to indicate who were the civil servants in the 19th century. However, in its societal structure and constitution the Republic of the United Netherlands differed greatly from the Kingdom which has existed since 1813, so in many cases we can only *decide* who were the civil servants before 1795 and who were not. In a way, therefore, the history of Dutch officialdom is what one decides it to be like[43]. Here lies the curious element of circularity that is inherent in narrative historiography. Narrativist philosophy explains this circularity by means of the thesis that all the predicates of a Ns can be derived analytically from the complete notion of a Ns.

Of course, it does not follow that arguments cannot or should not be adduced to justify what identities or Nss one wishes to discern in historical reality. In this connection I should like to draw attention to a famous historiographical discussion in the recent past on what was called the "general crisis of the 17th century". That this term refers to a (set of) Ns(s) or identity(ies) will need no further clarification. The French historian Mousnier was the first to defend this idea of a general crisis in the 17th century, although he was mainly concerned with France. Mousnier argued that in the 16th and 17th centuries France changed from the most classic feudal state into the most classic absolutist state. The institutional instabilities occasioned by this transition were aggravated by the economic decline characteristic of large parts of 17th century Europe and by the widening gulf between different social strata within both the town and rural populations. The Marxist historian Hobsbawm heartily

43. See also N. Hampson, *The Enlightenment,* Harmondsworth 1979; p. 9: "the attitudes which one chooses to regard as typical of the Enlightenment therefore constitute a free, subjective choice, which then, in turn, determines the shape of the synthesis one constructs for one's self. It may be argued with equal plausibility that Rousseau was either one of the greatest writers of the Enlightenment or its most eloquent and effective opponent. After weighing what the writers of the time thought of themselves and their period, one must finally impose a personal pattern on the rich anarchy of evidence. *Within limits, the Enlightenment was what one thinks it was* [italics mine]. This book embodies one particular synthesis, one personal point of view".

approved of the idea of the general crisis and interpreted it as the growing pains of an emerging capitalism. Trevor-Roper, on the other hand, was more sensitive to the institutional and social aspects of the crisis, which he explained as a struggle between Court and Country. However, Mrs Lublinskaya and the Dutch historians Kossmann and Schöffer rejected the whole idea of the general crisis; for various reasons they did not believe this concept to be conducive to a proper understanding of the 17th century's socio-economical and institutional reality[44] .

This discussion on the general crisis of the 17th century demonstrates that historians sometimes propose certain Nss and, by doing so, postulate specific entities in the past. And when they wish to see such an identity in the past, it will, in a certain sense, be there. Then they ascribe to that identity a number of properties, which can be expressed in terms of statements on the past. Every historian will do this in his own way and his arguments, given in terms of descriptions of the past, can be analytically derived from the complete notion of such an identity or Ns. However, other historians may doubt the fruitfulness of such a narrative concept and the point of view on the past embodied in it. But the consecutive historiographical discussions do not concern the *existence* of something in the past. Whether there was or was not a general crisis in the 17th century is decided neither by philosophical argument (in the way of discussions on e.g., the existence of God or Beauty), nor by an empirical searching of reality (do unicorns exist or not?). In historiography identities or Nss are discussed without the implication that something possessing such an identity should *exist* at all. For even historians like Kossmann and Schöffer, who reject the idea of a general crisis in the 17th century, do not consider the question as to whether there was such a crisis to be meaningless - whereas that is how we normally respond to discussions on the existence of fictitious entities. We can only speak of the existence of individual things of a certain type ("individualities"); identity, on the other hand, logically precedes but does not imply existence.

Historiographical discussion in the narrativist sense comes to an end as soon as we have proceeded from the level of "identities" to that of "individualities", and this even holds for the history of individual things of a certain type. Hence the distinction between Nss and narrative subjects (Chapter V, section (1)). Thus Huizinga writes "Luther als specimen van het biologisch genus mensch is strikt bepaald, maar Luther als historisch verschijnsel is even volkomen onbegrensd en onafgrensbaar als de Hervorming. (...) Men kan niet objectief vaststellen, welke historische gegevens tot het verschijnsel Hervorming behoren en welke niet. En deze onmogelijkheid ligt niet in den abstracten aard van het

44. There are two collections of essays on the general crisis of the 17th century: T.S. Asten ed., *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660,* London 1965; G. Parker ed., *The general crisis of the seventeenth century,* London 1978.

verschijnsel, maar in de historische beschouwing ervan. Want zij geldt even goed van een concreet historisch individu als van een algemeen historisch begrip".[45] The elusive character of historical identities or Nss is aptly expressed by Huizinga in this quotation.

In so far as historical knowledge is formulated in terms of identities or Nss, its lack of fixity presents a strong contrast to our knowledge of individual things of a certain type. This contrast is in many ways similar to that between smelling an odour or hearing a noise on the one hand and seeing a thing on the other (I emphasize that it is the odours and noises themselves I have in mind and not the *things* we have learned to associate them with such as flowers, motorcars or aeroplanes). Odours and noises are not individual things like the things we see. Note, for example that we cannot distinguish between a) hearing the same noise (we have heard before) and b) hearing another instance of the same kind of noise (we have heard before) — a) and b) have exactly the same meaning. However, in the case of the individual things we see, such a distinction can usually be made (one may think of different specimens of the same type of motorcar). Thus, speaking metaphorically, we could say that identities or Nss like "the Renaissance" or "the Cold War" are "smelled" or "heard"

45. Huizinga; p. 53: "as a human being Luther is strictly determined, but as a historical phenomenon Luther has not any more fixed and accurate limits than the Reformation. (...) It cannot be established objectively which historical data belong to the phenomenon Reformation and which do not. And the cause of this impossibility is not the abstract nature of the phenomenon, but the historical approach to it. For it holds for a concrete historical individual as much as for a general historical concept".

rather than “seen” by historians. This is probably what historists such as Ranke and Humboldt[46] had in mind, when they argued that the historian’s task is essentially an “Ahnen” of the “historische Ideen”.

46. See Iggers and Von Moltke; on p. 19 Humboldt writes: "The number of creative forces in history is not limited to those directly evident in events. Even if the historian has investigated them all, separately and in their interrelationships - the nature and the changes of the soil the variations of the climate, the intellectual capacity and character of nations, the even more particular character of individuals, the influence of the arts and sciences, and the profoundly incisive and widespread influences of social institutions - there still remains an even more powerfully active principle which, though not directly visible, imparts to these forces themselves their impetus and direction: that is, ideas which by their very nature lie outside the compass of the finite and yet pervade and dominate every part of world history". And of how these "ideas" are grasped by the historian Humboldt says: "here, as in art, not everything can be derived logically, one thing from another, by mere operation of the intellect, and dissected into concepts. One can only grasp that which is right, subtle and hidden, because the mind is properly attuned to grasping it", (p. 14) See also the introduction pp. liii-liv.

CHAPTER VII
NARRATIVE SUBSTANCES AND METAPHOR

There is a certain order prevalent in the narratio. This is evident even in the fact that the placement of the statements in a narratio cannot be arbitrarily changed (cf. Chapter III). So we can conceive of a specific set of rules by which the historian may be guided in order to achieve an adequate arrangement of the statements in his narratio. It should be noted that nothing has been implied as yet with regard to the status and nature of such rules, if any. We have only observed that there is, apparently, a certain order in narrative accounts of the past - and order suggests the presence of rules. In this chapter we will search for these rules and to this effect three kinds of rules will be discussed. Firstly, those that may reflect regularities among the events in the past related by them (section (1)), secondly, those that could express the regularities we can discover in the connections between (sets of) narrative sentences (section (2)), thirdly, those that rather resemble commands, like "do your best" or "win the game", with the intention of attaining a certain goal (section (3)). We shall find that the rules we are looking for have most in common with those I mentioned last.

(1) *Natural regularities as rules for the construction of narrative substances.* A very plausible strategy in our search for these narrativist rules is readily available: the regularities that have been discovered in the sciences and/or those whose reliability we ordinarily accept in everyday life are — from a narrativist point of view — identical in character with the rules that govern the construction of narratios. Similarly, these regularities must embody the rules that are applied when Nss are individuated in narrative historiography. This kind of claim as to the nature of the rules that govern the narratio (made for instance by philosophers of listory like M. White, A.C. Danto and P. Munz) has already been critized in Chapter II, section (5), when it was argued that to meet the requirements of the CLM is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the construction of acceptable narratios.

Bearing in mind what was said in Chapter VI, section (2) we can now point out yet another deficiency in the CLM-ist's proposal. Narratives *can* be constructed when individual things have not yet been recognized in reality. And even if the presence of particular categories of individual things has already been postulated in historical reality, what a narratio is concerned with (i.e. a certain Ns) is usually not the element of a particular class of Ns corresponding to some (type of) individual thing. And that means that certainly in those cases (which constitute the majority of narratios) scientific generalizations about individuals cannot serve as a guide-line for the construction of a narratio or a Ns (of course, the validity of these generalizations is immaterial to the present discussion).

It could be objected that in the sciences law-statements seldom refer

to individuals and, in fact, I agree that this objection is valid. However, as has been emphasized by Mandelbaum, the kind of law-statements CLM-ists have in mind always *are* generalizations about individuals[1]. And, of course, against *such* generalizations the objection formulated in the preceding paragraph is valid. I do not know whether the CLM can be adapted both to historiographical praxis and to the kind of law-statements accepted in the sciences in such a way that reference to individuals is avoided. I leave it to the disciples of the CLM to attempt such a purification. But even if, contrary to my expectations, such a purification procedure were to be succesful, it is not likely that a viable construction-rule for Nss can be obtained from this variant of the CLM-individual things (i.e. Nss) can never be derived from general rules (i.e. covering laws).

Another argument against covering laws as the source of rules for the construction of narratios and Nss is furnished by science-fiction literature. We have no difficulty in reading (or writing) such literature, in spite of the violation of a great many ordinary physical laws. In science-fiction we frequently witness people travelling faster than light or jumping through so-called "hyper space". The fact that we have no problems in understanding such literature suggests that it is unexceptionable from a narrative point of view. It might be objected that the science-fiction novelist merely invites us to accept *other* physical laws than those we are acquainted with and that science-fiction literature is constructed in conformity with those alternative physical laws. But this objection rests upon a misconception of how science-fiction literature is read and written. Its narratives are not embedded in a presupposed universe governed by extraordinary physical laws; moreover, the nature of these laws is only seldom expounded.

The presence of such deviant physical laws in the imagined world of science-fiction only *follows* from an understanding of these narratives. The constitution of some universe in a science-fiction novel with a specific set of physical laws (allowing e.g. of travelling faster than light) is *not prior* to but *dependent* on an understanding of these narratives. In many cases we may not even care to reconstruct all the deviant physical laws that are tacitly presupposed to govern the universe of a science-fiction novel. Moreover it should be noted that the strangeness of these imaginary worlds is less due to deviant physical laws than to the sug-gestiveness of particular narrativization procedures. Arthur Clarke's science-fiction novels owe their success to the unprecedented manner in which individuals move between solipsism and an abandonment of the world. Still more telling is the fact that narratios may violate with impunity what logic prescibes. Thus it has been convincingly argued by Ayer that it is logically impossible to go back in time[2]. Nevertheless, stories in which people travel back into the past with the help of so-called "time-machines" are

1. Mandelbaum (3); pp. 97 ff..
2. Ayer (2); p. 157.

easily understood by us. From a purely narrative point of view we have no reason to condemn such stories as incomprehensible. And in Chapter V, section (7) it was actually proved that narrative philosophy is indifferent to some logical inconsistencies.

Therefore, in our search for the rules that structure the narratio, neither logic nor scientific regularities can help us, in contrast to what is suggested by attempts to apply the CLM to narratios. Of course, it is not my intention to imply that the historian should dismiss logical rules and scientific generalizations with a sovereign disdain. I am only claiming in this section that the rules for narrative consistency are not to be found there. Saying scientifically and logically acceptable things on the past is certainly *part* of the task the historian is expected to perform. But telling the (scientific) truth and avoiding clashes with formal logic is not sufficient to provide the reader with a consistent *narrative.* Thus, the rules that govern the construction of narratios and of Nss cannot be identified with the general statements expressing empirical generalizations. This conclusion will certainly not astonish the narrative idealist and it may please the dialecticians.

(2) *Legislation for statements or for narratios?* When investigating the nature of the rules that govern the constitution of narratios we shall primarily have to consider the question of whether these rules, if any, only connect separate statements with separate statements or whether they control the constitution of entire narrative pictures of the past. When searching for these rules we can assume the point of view of the reader or writer of a narratio. That is, we decide to look upon the narratio as if it is a set of statements that are read or written one after the other (when reading or writing a narratio one always has "to eat one's way" through it). From this point of view our investigation into the requirements for a satisfactory and consistent narratio will – if all goes well – result in the enumeration of rules that indicate how sequences of individual statements should be tied to-gether (syntactically, semantically, pragmatically or in any other way).

There is, however, another point of view on the narratio which completely disregards this element of the reading or writing of narratios. We can see the total set of the statements of a narratio, when taken together collectively, as instrumental in creating a certain "image" or "picture" of the past. Here the narratio is not taken as a long string of individual statements along which the mind of the reader of writer of a narratio is invited to pass but as one "block" of statements lying before us ready for inspection and displaying all its elements and the order that governs them at one and the same time.

A comparison with the description of human action may clarify these two points of view. We may interpret human actions in a causal way by attempting to explain them in terms of their antecedent conditions. This approach requires a set of psychological and sociological regularities connecting certain external conditions with specific types of behaviour. The result will be a narrative report

consisting of a series of descriptions of actions in chronological order, while each of the actions is explained by relating it to its antecedent conditions. However, we can also give an overall survey of a set of actions performed by a certain person. For instance, we could say that many of Richelieu's political actions were inspired by the desire to achieve the political unification of France. We should be aware that this is an *interpretation* of a number of Richelieu's actions and therefore the unification of France need not have been consciously intended by him. Consequently, such "overall interpretations" of human behaviour cannot immediately be transformed into teleological variants of the causal descriptions of human actions. The two approaches to human behaviour are therefore incompatible and we could elucidate their structural disparities with the help of the following diagram.

$$\begin{array}{llllll} C_1 & C_3 & C_5 & C_7 & & \\ \searrow & \searrow & \searrow & \searrow & & (1) \\ a_1 \rightarrow & C_2 \rightarrow a_2 \rightarrow & C_4 \rightarrow & a_3 \rightarrow & C_6 \rightarrow a_4 & \ldots \end{array}$$

$$(C_1, C_2, C_3, \ldots), (a_1, a_2, a_3, \ldots)$$

$$\downarrow \qquad (2)$$

interpretation

where a_1, a_2, a_3, ... denote human actions; C_1, C_3, C_5,... the conditions of human actions in so far as they are not themselves the consequence of previous actions on the part of the human agent; C_2, C_4, C_6, ... the conditions prior to human actions in so far as they are themselves the consequence of previous actions on the part of the human agent. From now on I shall refer to model (1) as the "linear" model and to model (2) as the "global" model. In both models "→" indicates the line of argument (either causal or interpretative).

We could compare the two manners in which the actions of a human agent can be described with the two points of view from which we can consider the narrative sentences of a narratio. According to this comparison we should see narrative sentences as analogous to actions: we could therefore speak of "sentence actions". As we shall presently see, this is not merely a hybrid way of speaking: it can lead to useful and important insights into the nature of narrative historiography. The "sentence actions" that are part of the narratio could then be interpreted according to the linear approach - in which case we shall have to consider each "sentence action" individually and we will do so by relating it to the "sentence actions" immediately preceding it. Next, we could follow the global approach by regarding the narratio as one totality of "sentence actions" which cannot satisfactorily be analyzed if we only investigate how these individual "sentence actions" are embedded within their immediate surroundings. Characteristic of the linear approach will be its interest in generalizations on similar

"language situations"; situations, that is, in which a speaker after having said x-like things, may be expected to say y-like things. For according to the linear model, the cognitive essence lies in the causal connections between the individual actions and the conditions immediately preceding them by which such actions can be explained.

When we have at our disposal such generalizations on similar "language situations'" we shall be able a) to explain why people write or say specific things in the different phases of their narrative accounts and b) to determine what "sentence actions" we can or ought to use in the construction of a narratio. All this may create the impression that we have found out the rules that govern the narratio: indeed, once we know how to tie "sentence actions" together we also know — it would seem — how a consistent narratio has to be written. In fact the "linear", generalizing approach is characteristic of many current linguistic analyses of the narratio.

On the other hand we might propose "die Ersetzung einer generalisierenden Betrachtung (...) durch eine individualisierende Betrachtung": in the study of human action this amounts to investigating what unique interpretation we should give to a certain set of human actions. When we study "senten.ce actions" we are required to examine what Ns or point of view on the past is individuated by the statements of a certain narratio. The above question — the essence of Meinecke's well-known definition of historism[3] - suggests the great value of historist philosophy of history when it is translated into a theory of historical *writing.* Most of what historists have said on the past and on human action is completely acceptable as long as it is interpreted as a philosophical analysis of how human actions and the past have to be *described.* For instance, the uniqueness or so-called "Einmaligkeit" historists have always attributed to periods, things or human beings in the past certainly *is* a characteristic of Nss, i.e. *of accounts* of the past. The historist's defence of human freedom, based on the assumption that human action can never entirely be reduced to determining conditions prior to it, runs parallel to the argument of narrativist philosophy that a Ns (a unique individual thing) can never entirely be derived from general narrativist rules (as proposed by the "linear" model). The historist's thesis that the nature of historical things lies in their history has its counterpart in the "global" approach characteristic of narrative logic. In accordance with this approach it is argued that the nature of some Ns can only be established by a complete enumeration of all the statements of the narratio from beginning to end that are contained in the Ns proposed in it. Unlike the linear approach, both historism and the "global" approach emphasize the specificity or individuality of either elements of the past or of Nss at the cost of generalizations on them. Once more, the similarities between historism and narrative logic are striking. However, we should understand historism not as a philosophy on *things* in the past but on their (narrative)

3. Meinecke; p. 2.

description', and as we know the past only from descriptions of it, it is not surprising that it was easy for historists to confuse the two. Thus, the rationale of my comparison of human actions with "sentence actions" has been to recommend once again a historism cleansed of metaphysical accretions.

I do not wish to deny the fruitfulness of the linear, linguistic approach. For instance, the recent studies by T. van Dijk[4] undeniably promise a successful future for this kind of inquiry into how statements are connected in texts. In a somewhat less convincing way the linear, linguistic approach has already been adapted by Stempel to the writing of history[5]. Nevertheless, I seriously doubt whether the most fundamental secrets of the narratio can be unearthed in this way. Above all, I am suspicious of the tendency present in the linear approach to substitute a psychologistical for a logical line of argument. The adherent of the linear approach will tend to generalize about existing narratios, which implies that a narratio has to be divided up into its component parts and in such a way that these parts resemble those of other narratios. From this approach we can expect at most a number of psychologistic generalizations on how limited strings of statements (i.e. *parts* of narratios) can be tied together in such a way that they are actually *understood* by the average user of the language. Firstly, this approach is likely to lapse into the view of the narratio I criticized in the first section of this chapter. Secondly, the psychologism inherent in it is subject to the criticism formulated in Chapter I, section (2).

Indeed, as was suggested at the end of the previous paragraph, the linear or linguistic approach is primarily and probably exclusively concerned with the *intelligibility* of the narratio. When a number of statements have been strung together in conformity with the regularities discovered thanks to the linear, linguistic approach to language the result will certainly be an intelligible piece of language. But being intelligible or understandable is only a preliminary requirement for a piece of language to be an acceptable and consistent narratio. There are numerous types of intelligible texts whose statements are connected so as to satisfy the linguist's criteria of intelligibility and which nevertheless do not deserve the predicate "narratio". A few examples of such texts are chemical treatises, mathematical proofs, recommendations for military or political action, paragraphs of the Penal Code. And, to remain a little closer to home, we could isolate some ten or fifteen consecutive sentences from a historical narratio. In most cases, such a sequence of sentences will be intelligible but when

4. Van Dijk's study can be looked upon as an analysis of what I will later call the criteria of the "intelligibility" of the narratio.
5. In his article Stempel tends to depart from a number of highly generalized "standard" narratios that provide us with the models for parts of actual narratios. This strategy begs the question as to the nature of the narratio and will not show us how actual narratios, the complete narrative wholes produced by historians, come into being. Once again, the approach is analytic instead of synthetic.

considered as a whole it cannot possibly be called a narratio. Parts of narratios need not be narratios themselves, although such parts are often perfectly intelligible and sometimes even highly informative. Similarly, we may often be able to explain a set of actions performed by some human individual in terms of what he did before each action and what the other conditions for his actions were, while at the same time we would be at a loss if we were asked to give an overall-survey of this set of actions as a whole. A possible exception to this rule may be the actions of people who cannot afford to have a will of their own, like Ivan Denisovich[6].

The main difference between requirements for intelligibility and requirements for narrativist adequacy, lies, in my opinion, in the fact that the former does not pay any attention to what I would like to call the "constructivist" aspects of narrative discourse. At the beginning of Chapter V it was claimed that the statements of a narratio have a *double* function: a) they describe the past, and b) by means of these statements an "image" or "picture" of the past (a Ns) is constructed. Requirements for intelligibility only function at level a) where historical reality is described. The descriptions of the past contained in the statements of a narratio must be tied together in an intelligible way, viz. there should be no ambiguity as to what relative pronouns refer to, changes of topics should be clearly announced, most of the consecutive individual statements of a narratio need some common denominator etc. At this level the linear, linguistic approach will probably be successful. But intelligibility alone does not provide a set of statements with a "face" of its own i.e. it is no guarantee for the communication of an "image" or "picture" of the past. I would like to call to mind the examples in the previous paragraph: mathematical proofs, clusters of sentences of a narratio etc. Thus, although "smoothness of passage" (GalliE) and intelligibility are certainly amongst the requirements for a satisfactory narratio, they do not explain what it is that makes a particular text into a consistent narratio. For *this* question can only be answered satisfactorily if we also take into account the second function of statements in a narratio, i.e. their capacity to *construct* an "image" or "picture" of the past. This capacity of narrative statements corresponds to what I have called the "constructivist"' aspects of narrative discourse.

We could liken the narrativist historian to an architect. The architect always has to bear in mind two things. Firstly, he must be sure that whatever he is going to build will not come crashing down on the heads of those living in it. That requires from the architect a certain amount of *general* knowledge as to how building materials such as stones, timber, concrete-constructions and the like should be combined. We are placing

6. Ivan Denisovich's life in the camp was so completely determined by factors external to himself that it would be fruitless to ask for an overall-interpretation of his actions. See A. Solzhenitsyn, *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich*, New York 1963.

the architect on a level with that of the linguistic advocating a linear approach to language. But, secondly, the architect has to construct a building, a house, a station, a school etc. that is suited to a specific purpose. Moreover, he probably wants to construct a building that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. And here, of course, we discover an analogy with a narrativist inquiry that deals with *entire* narratios and not only with parts of them. Or we may think of a painting. What we see is not a tremendous number of inter-related coloured dots (although, perhaps, part of the *act* of painting could be described that way). What we do see is the painting as a whole in which part of (an imagined) reality has been depicted. All this may sound depressingly holistic and anti-scientific, but if we want to understand the narratio at all we shall have to accept these realities. The lesson we can learn from these comparisons is that when we choose to talk of narratios as such we cannot afford to divide them up into parts: it is *entire* narratios we have to cope with. That explains, too, why the linguistic approach is so curiously indifferent to narratios. As a matter of fact the general knowledge an architect possesses is equally helpful to him whether he builds bridges, houses, hotels or government offices; likewise, the general knowledge gained in a linear, linguistic inquiry is — admittedly — helpful in the writing of narratios, but also in the construction of party-programmes, medical textbooks, theatrical plays, travel guides and so on. What is so peculiar to narratios — i.e. their ability to convey a "picture" or "image" of the past — falls beyond the scope of the linguistic approach because it never analyzes *entire* narratios in their unique specificity.

The exclusive interest of the linguistic, linear approach in the descriptive aspects of the narrative use of language suggests furthermore its affinity with a narrative realist interpretation of narrative language. As soon as we abandon the conviction that the narratio individuates a certain Ns (i.e. that it proposes a certain "image" or "picture" of the past) — so that we should be left with only a descriptivist analysis of narrative language — the narratio degenerates into just a long string of individual statements which are all, we may hope, intelligibly connected. Obtaining narrative knowledge of the past consists, within this view, in following the "linguistic path" marked out by the statements of the narratio. However, when reading a narratio we should avoid the intuitition that we are following a certain linguistic path. Reading a narratio should not be compared with a stroll through a garden of historical facts, but with obtaining a total view of that garden. A narratio does not lead us along a number of vistas that are worth seeing in their own right, nor does it attempt to guide us as elegantly as possible from one vista to another. The idea that the narratio should be a journey through the past is a misleading metaphor. The statements of a narratio should not be regarded as a complex system of sign-posts each one pointing to the next (while the requirement that they should do so is equivalent to the linguistic requirements for intelligibility). This manner of thinking has been inspired

by the narrative realist intuition that the narratio "should be seen as the verbalization of all the individual images of a film made on the past", an intuition we rejected in Chapter IV (cf. p. 79). The narratio can better be likened to a map (although even this metaphor is somewhat risky): all the features of a specific view of the past are at once before us just as a map or a bird's eye view of a landscape presents one overall view of all the geographical features of a particular piece of the earth's surface.

The upshot of these considerations is this. Criteria for the constitution of consistent narratios will not be found as long as we wish to know how (sets of) statements can be intelligibly connected. In the narratio a new linguistic entity is created (i.e. a Ns) and we can only meaningfully ask how such Nss can be constituted in a consistent way if we speak of *complete* narratios. This is very important for our search for the rules governing the constitution of narratios. From general deductive rules we can only deduce *classes* of things and not *unique individual* things like complete narratios. Therefore, from a logical point of view we must come to the conclusion that rules for the construction of narratios cannot be given. An analogy may be helpful. During his artistic education the painter has been taught how to apply rules of perspective in order to obtain an illusion of depth and distance in his picture; he has learned how to achieve a *clair-obscur* effect and so on. But by their very nature such general rules or instructions cannot guide the painter in making *this* drawing or *this* painting into the unique drawing or picture it is. The laws of perspective determine a set of features of this drawing or painting which it shares with all *other* drawings and paintings in which these laws have been applied. Laws of perspective can be compared to the rules of intelligibility that the historian has to obey if he wishes to be understood by his audience. But what is unique in *this* drawing or in *this* narratio cannot be derived from general deductive rules for the production of either drawings or narratios.

Neither is the uniqueness of a narratio the linguistic counterpart of the uniquesness of (the part of) the past investigated by the historian and to which he has applied a set of general rules in making a narrative account of it. Firstly, this idea is based on the narrativist realist assumption that a narratio should be the projection of part of the past onto the linguistic level of the narratio in accordance with certain translation rules. Secondly, the uniqueness of a narratio cannot be explained by the uniqueness of its subject-matter: if we do hold the view that a narratio has a subject-matter — and we shall presently see that such a view is not wholly unproblematic — we may be sure that innumerable narratios can be written on one and the same subject-matter. The uniqueness of a narratio does not lie in its subject-matter but in its *interpretation* of this subject-matter. The uniqueness of a narratio is inextricably tied up with the very essence of a narratio: i.e. its capacity to propose an interpretation of part of the past. So it would be aprofound mistake to think that by continually refining the deductive linguistic rules for the narrative use of language we would be able to narrow down the class of narratios that can be constructed on a certain historical topic, in order to approach the ideal of one unique narratio on

that topic. The uniqueness of a narratio does not manifest itself in a number of irrelevant details that are left after general deductive rules have been applied but in the historian's attempt to give an acceptable account of part of the past. Narratios are written with the purpose of presenting specific, unique interpretations of the past: what is essential to them is precisely that which escapes the application of general, deductive rules. The fact that general rules governing the construction of narratios cannot be conceived of does not leave us empty-handed. If there are no such rules there may very well be rules for *assessing the relative merits* of individual complete narratios. It could even be argued that the latter kind of rules (or rather: criteria) still have something in common with the general, deductive rules discussed in this section. For they could be translated into a general, deductive rule of the form "construct a narratio in such a way that it satisfies best the criteria for assessing the relative merits of individual narratios". "Rules" or exhortations of this kind usually have little practical value. Members of a football-team will be none the wiser when they are advised to attempt to win the match. On the other hand, the rules we apply when performing some arithmetical operation are identical with the criteria for deciding whether the operation has been correctly executed. Thus it may be that the intuitions by which historians are guided when constructing a narratio are not so different from the criteria for deciding upon its relative merits. In fact, historians often decide on the narratio they ultimately write down after having considered and compared a great number of other possible narratios on the same topic. So there need not be too wide a gap between the construction of a particular narratio and the assessment of its relative merits.

In the next section and in Chapter VIII I hope to demonstrate the nature of the criteria for deciding upon the relative merits of individual, complete narratios. At this stage in our discussion I shall be content to claim a) that no general, deductive rules for the construction of narratios but only criteria for judging them can be propounded, and b) that the idea of such criteria, in the absence of general, deductive rules for the constitution of narratios is not inconsistent. To illustrate the latter claim: we may be fairly sure what makes us prefer one chair to another without knowing anything about the manufacture of chairs.

Our results, obviously, correspond with our rejection of the Ideal Narratio (cf. Chapter II). The search for the Ideal Narratio was inspired by the idea that we would be able to find (translation-)rules enabling us to translate the raw material of the past in an ideal way into a narrative account of the past. In this section we have learnt to be content with criteria of narrative consistency: that is, rules which help us to decide which narratio out of a competing set of narratios is to be preferred. And such rules or criteria only operate *after* narratios have been given to us — thus, they enable us to select only the *better* narratio but not the *best* or Ideal Narratio. It follows that comparing narratios is comparing narrative structures as such. We prefer one narratio to another, not because one and the same well-defined subject-matter (or part of the past itself) is explained

and described in both of them, but because a greater degree of narrative consistency has been achieved in the better one. And it could not be otherwise. As we have seen in Chapter IV narratios do not *reflect* but *define* the "face" of the past. Consequently, different narratios have different subject-matters (which is in itself a dangerous thing to say, because it suggests the existence of some objective, non-narrative criterion with the help of which the subject-matter of a narratio could be indicated - quod non): therefore, no subject-matter, not even "the past itself", could be the supreme arbiter in the competition for the best narrative interpretation of the past. All narratios are incommensurable.

This, furthermore, suggests yet another interpretation of the fact that there are no rules prescribing how narratios are to be constituted out of raw materials (true statements on the past), while by elimination we can select the most consistent narratio out of a set of narratios. We could say that there are no rules prior to narratios that determine how we should look at historical reality (i.e. rules for the construction of an acceptable narratio) because each narratio is in fact such a set of rules *itself.* Precisely because the past has no "face" of its own whose narrative reproduction is subject to rules, we can maintain that a narratio is a proposal indicating how historical reality is to be imagined. As we shall see in the last section of this chapter, narratios (or Nss) define a certain way of seeing the past - and that part of the past that falls within the scope of such a "seeing as ..." often exceeds by far what is actually mentioned in the statements contained in the narratio. It is not unreasonable to say that the narratio, in that it defines a certain "seeing as..." of the past, in fact functions as a rule or a system of rules indicating how to imagine the past.

So far, I have always characterized the linguist's task as the search for rules that determine how *statements* can be tied together *intelligibly.* On the other hand, I have often said that I was looking for the rules or criteria that guarantee or decide upon the *consistency* of *narratios.* It may be wondered, whether we are allowed to speak of the *consistency* of *statements* in an acceptable narratio. Of course this can be done. In an acceptable narratio we are dealing with a string of statements which are both intelligible and consistent. But we should not forget that what makes such a string of statements consistent is the fact that a clear or consistent "picture" or "image" of the past is individuated by it. Only these "pictures" or "images" of the past (i.e. Nss) are (un)clear or (in)consistent in the strict sense of the word. But each Ns owes its existence to the statements it contains. Thus, a string of statements may also be said to be (un)clear or (in)consistent, albeit in a derivative sense.

(3) *Metaphor.* At the beginning of Chapter V we found that the statements of a narratio have a double function: 1) they describe the past (in attributing certain properties to those things the (narrative) subjects of these statements refer to), 2) they constitute an "image" or "picture" of (part of) the past (the statements of the narratio individuate a Ns). Consequently, in the narratio we constitute an "image" or "picture" of the past by describing it, and we describe the past when individuating an

"image" or "picture" of it. Both things are done at one and the same time in the narratio. Thus, two ordinarily seperate kinds of language use — description and individuation — are melted together into *one* linguistic in the narratio.

This double function of narrative statements can also be claimed for metaphorical statements. Take the metaphorical statements "Stalin was a wolf". Surely there is a descriptive element in this statement so that it can be either true or false. Part of what it expresses is that Stalin was a cruel tyrant and that his actions resembled those that are usually attributed to wolves. I am not claiming precision for this paraphrase; its imperfection will presently be explained. I only wish to say that the metaphorical statement asserts something on the historical personality known by the name of Stalin and that in a sense the statement could prove to be false, for instance, if historical research were to discover that Stalin's actions were nearly always inspired by humane and altruistic motives. On the other hand - and here metaphorical statements differ from literal ones - the statement "Stalin was a wolf invites us to formulate a specific kind of descriptive, literal statement on Stalin, i.e. statements expressing the greed, cruelty and inhumanity as manifested in Stalin's political career. But this second function of the metaphorical statement is definitely not to formulate or to paraphrase such statements themselves: it merely expresses that such statements should be used in preference to others when Stalin is the subject of discussion. This second function of the metaphorical statement is to define or to individuate a "point of view" from which Stalin's political actions should be seen, or to formulate a "model" to which his actions should be adapted. Burke even restricts the meaning of metaphorical statements to this second function when he writes "metaphor is a device for seeing something in terms of something else. (...) (W)e could say that metaphor tells us something about one character from the point of view of another character. And to consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a perspective upon A"[7]. But, as I suggested above, this is too narrow.

Thus, the contrast between the "descriptive" or "literalist" function and the "point of view" function of the metaphorical statement in question is that the former is a generalization about Stalin's actions (which can be falsified by empirical findings) while the latter only invites us to describe Stalin in a specific way, not supplying such descriptions itself and therefore not being falsifiable. The latter contains no empirical claims and is not even a rule for the formulation of empirically controllable statements. It only indicates what kind of statements ought to be selected from all the possible statements on Stalin when his political career is being discussed. The analogy with the narrative statements contained in a Ns immediately strikes one. These narrative statements also describe the past but in addition they individuate a Ns or define a

7. Burke, pp. 503-4.

"seeing as ..." of historical reality (see Chapter IV, section (3)). In fact, metaphorical statements are excellent summarizers of narratios: they invite us to conceive of those literal statements on the past that are to be found in the relevant narratios. For instance, the metaphorical statement "European culture was *reborn* in the course of the 15th century" invites us to select or prefer the kind of statement we find in narratios on the Renaissance from all those that could be made on European culture in this period, while, of course, the metaphorical statement does not explicitly enounce *any* of these statements itself. Our response to this and similar invitations to see the past in a specific way is always guided by what we have learned to associate with terms like "rebirth".

It follows from these considerations that the difference between literal and metaphorical statements lies in the latter's capacity to define or individuate a "point of view". This implies that metaphorical statements can never be completely reduced to literal statements that only have descriptive or cognitive content. In this respect my analysis clashes with most current theories on metaphorical statements which, in contrast to Burke, emphasize the descriptive component of metaphor. Indeed, these theories are largely concerned with establishing what the meaning of metaphorical statements is. Following Shibles, we can discern two traditions: a) the supervenient theory and b) the substitution or literalist theory of metaphor. According to the first, "metaphor conveys meaning which literal language cannot convey"[8]. Metaphor is seen as a kind of new and irreducible idiom. This theory is defended by Shibles himself, by Wheelwright, and, perhaps, by Black in his influential article on metaphor[9]. According to the second theory (whose history goes back to Aristotle) metaphors are covert similes which can be translated without loss of meaning into statements whose words only have their literal meaning. Shibles discerns yet a third theory viz. Beardsley's controversion theory of metaphor. However, since I agree with Shibles that this theory comes close to b), I shall not discuss it here. It should be noted that the opposed theories a) and b) share one important way of thinking, viz. that the meaning of a metaphorical statement should be purely cognitive. This idea is also vital for the meaningfulness of the discussion regarding the two theories: only if a purely cognitive meaning is attributed to metaphorical statements does it make sense to compare metaphorical statements with literal statements — whose meaning is to express

8. Shibles; p. 65.
9. When Black discusses the problem of paraphrasing metaphors he writes: "(o)ne of the points I most wish to stress is that the loss in such cases is a loss in cognitive content; the relevant weakness of the literal paraphrase is not that is may be tiresomely prolix or boringly explicit (or deficient in qualities of style); it fails to be a translation because it fails to give the insight that the metaphor did". Cf. Black (1); p. 46. This obviously comes close to the supervenience theory; nevertheless, Beardsley interprets Black's article as a defense of the controversion theory. Cf. Beardsley (1); p. 160.

something on a well defined set of objects (or on aspects of them) either descriptively or evaluatively. This assumption is therefore the common ground which prevents that the adherents of the supervenient theory arguing that paraphrasing metaphorical statements involves "loss of cognitive content" (Black[10]) should be talking at cross-purposes with the defenders of the substitution theory rejecting this view.

What I wish to challenge is this "descriptivist" view, which I define as the conviction that the meaning of metaphorical statements should be purely cognitive, i.e. that all they should do is give information on the nature of reality in a way similar to literal statements. The supervenient theory defends the view that the shades of meaning created by metaphor are too subtle to be adequately rendered in the literal language we have at our disposal — which is not accepted by the substitution theory. However, both the supervenient theory and the substitution theory share the "descriptivist" conviction in that they both deny that metaphor should have an extra dimension which literal statements lack. Once again, I do agree that *part* of the meaning of metaphor has a cognitive character but it also goes beyond that. And it is this "surplus" meaning that constitutes the essential logical difference between metaphorical and literal statements. Metaphor is much more than just an embellishment of language or an attempt to say poetically what can be expressed in literal language as well. If the metaphorical dimension were to be eliminated from our language, our view of the world would immediately disintegrate into disconnected and intractable bits of information. Metaphor synthesizes our knowledge of the world. To say the least, the consistency we can give to the world thanks to our historical awareness, our capacity to discern identities (Nss and, especially, the Ns "I_{int}") in reality, would be obliterated as soon as metaphor was discarded.

I begin my justification of this contention by pointing out that all students of metaphor agree that a necessary condition for a statement to be a metaphorical statement is that it contains one or more words or phrases that do not have its or their ordinary, literal meaning. This is expressed in many different ways. Thus it is said that the metaphorical use of language "consists in some transformation of literal meaning" (Black), that there is a "logical opposition" between the literal meaning of a word and the meaning it has in a metaphorical context (Beardsley), while Levin in his recent study of metaphor simply speaks of the "semantic deviance" characteristic of metaphor[11]. Lastly, Mooij writes that in metaphor "some of the features of F [i.e. the field of literal meaning of the word that is metaphorically used] are incompatible with (our conception of) A [i.e. the subject which the metaphoric utterance is substantially about]"[12].

Bearing this in mind, I propose to consider what would happen if metaphorical statements were to be negated. Take the metaphorical

10. Black (1); p. 46.
11. Black (1); p. 35; Beardsley (2); p. 299; Levin; p. 4.
12. Mooij; p. 21.

statement "x is a" 1) and let us assume, on descriptivist assumptions, that this metaphorical statement is equivalent to the literal statement "x is ± ø" 2) (I deliberately write "± ø" instead of just "ø" in order to reassure the adherents of the supervenient theory). Now let us negate the metaphorical statement 1); whether we are dealing with an internal or an external negation is of no consequence. Thanks to the "logical opposition" (Beardsley) or "incompatibility" (Moorj) between the subject-term and the predicate-term that is universally claimed for metaphorical statements, negation will always yield very obvious and sometimes even logical truths (e.g. "Stalin was *not* a wolf"). Let the negation of statement 1) be the statement "x is not a" 3). Clearly, even the metaphorical character of the metaphorical statement is lost when it is negated: the "logical opposition" or "incompatibility" so essential for a statement to be a metaphor is no longer present[13]. Now, 2) and 3) will be perfectly compatible. According to the descriptivist assumption 1) and 2) are equivalent and we shall have to conclude that if descriptivism is right a metaphorical statement and its negation are compatible, which is absurd.

We can avoid this absurd conclusion by presuming that metaphorical statements in addition to their descriptive function also have the function of defining a "point of view" and that the latter function was eliminated when 1) was translated into the exclusively descriptive statement 2). If we retain this second function we shall see that negating a metaphorical statement essentially amounts to the rejection of the point of view that is defined by it. The fact that the "point of view" element and not the "descriptive" element of a metaphorical statement tends to absorb the negation also suggests that the former is much more conspicuous than the latter. I add, lastly, that the two functions of metaphorical statements should not be seen as *parts* of the *whole* meaning of the metaphorical statement itself. The metaphorical statement itself should not be regarded as a compound of its two functions, each of which could be discovered by "subtracting" the other from the meaning of the metaphorical statement itself. The metaphorical statement has two functions and it does not have some initial meaning in which both functions are still combined. Similarly, tools are never provided with a delimitative enumeration of the uses we can make of them.

The above remarks may be illustrated by an example of a negated metaphor. On Thermidor 9th Robespierre attempted to read his last and most magisterial speech to the Convention. The purpose of this speech was to denounce people such as Fouché, Tallien, Barras and Barère whom Robespierre suspected of plotting against his régime of virtue. However, in this most dramatic parliamentary session of all time,

13. I disagree with Black when he writes that the negation of a metaphor "is as metaphorical as its opposite" (Black (2); p. 35). Metaphorical "points of view" cannot be defined negatively. Similarly the statement "theory T is false" is not *itself* a theory although the statement may be supported by theoretical considerations.

Tallien, Barère and others prevented Robespierre from delivering his speech, and this was the most immediate cause of Robespierre's fall. The following quotation from Robespierre's speech is relevant to our discussion of metaphor: "Les bons et les méchants, les tyrans et les amis de la liberté disparaissent de la Terre mais à des conditions differentes. Français, ne souffrez pas que vos ennemis cherchent à abaisser vos âmes et à énervervosvertusparune funeste doctrine. Non Chaumette, non, Fouché, la mort n'est point un sommeil éternel. Citoyens, effacez des tombeaux cette maxime impie qui jette un crêpe funèbre sur la Nature et qui insulte à la mort; gravez-y plutôt celle-ci: *La mort est le commencement de l'immortalité"*[14].

This quotation contains two metaphorical statements on death. We may be sure that the disagreement between Robespierre and Fouché did not concern the descriptive element in both metaphors. Both Robespierre and Fouché knew a dead man when they saw one and even Robespierre would not deny the resemblances between dead and sleeping people. That such resemblances exist is a necessary condition for the truth of the descriptive component of Fouché's metaphor. The fact that we cannot expect Robespierre and Fouché to quarrel about the descriptive content of this metaphor already suggests that all its force is concentrated in the second function of metaphorical statements. Consequently, it is in their *attitudes* towards death, their *views* upon death that both revolutionaries professed different opinions. Robespierre held that death should be "seen as" the beginning of immortality; whereas Fouché was supposed to "see" death "as" an eternal sleep. Nor is the acceptance of either "point of view" an arbitrary affair, although they cannot be falsified by facts. For each point of view can be argued. Thus Fouché was credited by Robespierre with the conviction that we can do whatever we like without being punished after death. Robespierre, on the other hand, suggested that History will eventually show who were the good and who were the bad guys in the past and that we should therefore act as if, in a certain sense, reward and punishment are to be meted out to us. On account of these considerations Robespierre feels that his "point of view" on death is more commendable than Fouché's "seeing as". But their opinions on the objective characteristics of dead people, the way death can be described, do not divide them. Therefore, the negation of this metaphorical statement should not be interpreted as if the descriptive content of the statement were denied: the plausibility of a "point of view" has been rejected. But, once again, when the metaphorical statement "la mort est un sommeil éternel" both describes reality *and* defines a "point of view", it is the metaphorical statement *itself* that does both things at one and the same time and not the paraphrases of both its functions, e.g. 1) "dead people resemble those who sleep" and 2) "look at dead people as if they were asleep". Similarly, speaking is not a) making noises and b) expressing ideas, but doing both things all in one. Paraphrase 2) *is* the "point of view" that

14. M. de Robespierre, *Discours et rapports à la Convention,* s.l. 1965; p. 292.

is individuated or defined by the metaphorical statement.

When it is recognized that a metaphor - in addition to its descriptive content — also has a function that consists in defining a "point of view" from which reality should be seen, we can try to find a solution for two problems that are often discussed in the literature on metaphor. First, it is sometimes asked wether metaphorical statements can be (un)true[15]. In order to answer this question we must separate the "descriptive" from the "point of view" function of metaphor. With regard to the former it is perfectly correct to say that metaphorical statements can be either true or false like literal statements. However, we ought to be careful in this connection and should differentiate between two kinds of metaphorical statements. There are metaphorical statements we can understand even if we have no initial knowledge of what is asserted by the descriptive component of the metaphor. If we are ignorant of the cruelty of Stalin's actions or even sincerely believe that he was a benefactor of mankind, we can still understand the metaphor "Stalin was a wolf". On the other hand, if we do not know that the dead do not speak, move etc. as is also the case with sleeping people, the metaphor "la mort est un sommeil éternel" is incomprehensible. In such cases the recognition of the knowledge of the truth of the descriptive meaning of metaphor is a necessary condition for understanding it. In such metaphors all emphasis lies on their "point of view" function, while the truth of the descriptive content of the metaphor merely sees to it that the metaphor does make sense.

The best criterion for deciding where the emphasis is placed is to negate the metaphorical statement and see whether an aspect of reality itself or the candidacy of a "point of view" on reality appears to be at stake. In the case of a *purely* metaphorical statement, i.e. a metaphor whose descriptive content cannot be negated without dragging the whole metaphor into meaninglessness, it no longer makes sense to speak of its truth or falsity. The whole meaning of such metaphors is concentrated in their function of defining or individuating a "point of view". Descriptive knowledge of reality is no longer *expressed* but rather *used* by such metaphors to individuate a "point of view". And an individuating use of language, cannot be said to be empirically either true or false (I would like to call to mind the distinction made in Chapter V between "individuation" and "identification").

Secondly, students of metaphor often wonder whether metaphorical statements can be paraphrased by literal, non-metaphorical statements without loss of meaning. The individuating function characteristic of metaphorical statements being absent from literal statements, our first reaction will tend to be a negative one. However, it could be argued that descriptive, literal statements *sometimes* do succeed in individuating a "point of view", namely a Ns. Consequently, it is possible, at least in theory, to paraphrase metaphorical statements with the help of a narratio.

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15. Levin devotes much attention to this problem. See Levin; Chapter VI.

And the idea that there should be a kind of gliding scale between the narratio on the one hand and metaphorical statements on the other is not entirely absurd[16]. Perhaps the concept of *myth* could provide the necessary *trait d'union* between the two. But an investigation of this problem clearly falls beyond the scope of our present interests.

Thus, when we claim in accordance with the results of Chapters V and VI, that description and individuation are the two logical operations that embody the essence of the narrative use of language, we are justified in ascribing to the narratio a profoundly metaphorical character[17]. Metaphor can also be reduced to these two logical operations. That the narrative use of language is essentially metaphorical is the third crucial thesis I want to sustain in this study. What is most interesting about both metaphor and the narratio is that apart from describing reality they individuate or define a certain "point of view" or a "seeing as", from which reality is to be interpreted. Both narratio and metaphor individuate by means of a linguistic device (a Ns or the "point of view" function of metaphorical statements) a perspective in terms of which reality should be analyzed or viewed. Indeed, as far as their most conspicuous logical property is concerned, both narratio and metaphor are not descriptions but proposals, which according to their nature can never be empirically true or false. This, incidentally, is a final justification of our argument at the end of Chapter III against the concepts truth or falsity of narratios. Lastly, I should like to add the following proviso to what has been said in this section up to now: even if convincing objections to my analysis of metaphor could be raised, this will not harm the remainder of my argument. For, from now on, whenever the metaphorical character of the narratio is to be referred to, I shall take the concept "metaphor" in the sense meant above. I will not defend opinions on the narratio that are not reducible to the analysis of metaphor given in this section. So if anyone should doubt the reliability of my pronouncements on metaphor this alone is no reason to reject the inferences I have derived from the metaphorical nature of the narratio. He

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16. The affinity between "stories" and "metaphors" has already been shown by Schon: "problem settings are mediated, I believe, by the "stories" people tell about troublesome situations - stories in which they describe what is wrong and what needs fixing. When we examine the problem-setting stories told by the analysts and practitioners of social policy, it becomes apparent that the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlying the stories which generate problem setting and set the directions of problem solving". See Schön (2); p. 255.
17. In his very illuminating article Stephen Humphreys discusses the metaphorical character of historical knowledge. He argues that metaphors are the models for our descriptions of the past: "(...) metaphors are the nuclei of models of reality. In metaphor, a pattern of order and intelligibility originally discerned in one set of phenomena is transferred to another set; thereby metaphors suggest a structure — a system of categories and regular relationships — within this second segment of reality". Cf. Stephen Humphreys; p. 15. However, I take exception to Stephen Humphreys' tendency to see metaphors as models that are previously *given* to the historian; in my opinion they are *born* in the narratio.

will only have to bear in mind that in *his* opinion I am using the term "metaphor" in what might ironically be called a "metaphorical sense".

What conclusions can be drawn from these findings? Just like metaphor, the narratio describes reality and individuates a "point of view" at one and the same time. But, as was also the case with metaphorical statements, the narrative statements in a narratio must not be seen as compounds of a descriptive and a narrative meaning that is determined for once and for all. More particularly, what the narrative meaning of a statement is and what Ns it helps to individuate also depends on what *other* narrative statements a narratio contains. For instance, the author of a recent study of the history of Belgium and the Netherlands since 1780 has said that in the second half of the 19th century the Belgian Catholic Party rejected protectionism[18]. Such a statement could lead to either of the following conclusions, viz.: 1) "curiously enough the Belgian Catholic Party tended to embrace a policy of free-trade in the second half of the 19th century. This anomalous phenomenon of a Christian Party defending a liberalist economic policy can however, in this special case, be explained when we take into account the relevant circumstances c_1 ...c_n" or 2) "in the second half of the 19th century a policy of free-trade ceased to be characteristic of liberalist economic policy. Thus, the Belgian Catholic Party was one of the first to abandon protectionism". The reader should be aware that this kind of dilemma is quite typical of the writing of history. Whoever writes a history of the economic policy of liberalism or of Christian Democracy will eventually have to choose between these two pronouncements. Next, another historian may argue that in his opinion a mistaken view has been defended and so historical discussion goes on without ever reaching bedrock.

The lesson we may learn from this example is that the one statement "in the second half of the 19th century the Belgian Catholic Party advocated free-trade" can be used to individuate two different Nss (whose relevant parts have been roughly sketched by the pronouncements 1) and 2)). In both cases the statement as far as its descriptive meaning is concerned, is *illustrative* of a specific historical thesis (or Ns) (cf. pp. 138—9). In addition to its task of describing the historical past itself, such a narrative statement has also become an *argument* for a "point of view", e.g. "the acceptance of a free-trade policy by the Belgian Catholic Party is remarkable proof of its realistic pragmatism, which we can claim so often for Christian Democratic parties", or "the example of the Belgian Catholic Party only proves that a free-trade policy should not be seen as an exclusively liberal economic policy". In narratios on the history of Christian Democracy or on that of free-trade policy in the 19th century the statement in question is liable to either interpretation. Anyone who has ever tried his hand at writing history will have experienced the extreme flexibility of descriptive statements on the past:

18. E.H. Kossmann, *The Low Countries 1780-1940,* Oxford 1978; pp. 252 ff..

they meekly fit the most disparate accounts of the past[19]. This flexibility of narrative statements is explained by the illustrative or argumentative character they have in a narrative context; they have this character because they may contribute to the individuation of a great variety of Nss. Descriptive statements have, as it were, no narrative compass of their own. They only get such a compass when the historian provides a "point of view": descriptive statements can then become illustrations of this "point of view" or arguments in its favour. But narrative statements will never be more than illustrations or arguments; i.e. they should never be identified with historical theses themselves. Even if a Ns contains only *one* statement p, this statement is merely an illustration of the Ns called "p". The dependence of separate descriptive statements upon the "points of view" individuated by them when taken together, their "compasslessness" when taken in isolation, underlines once more the circularity so characteristic of historical knowledge. Isolated individual statements of a narratio may indicate all conceivable directions — only a narrative "point of view" can give them a "narrative direction", yet this "point of view" only comes into being thanks to those helpless, descriptive statements.

These considerations help to clarify the assertion defended by many historians (e.g. Becker[20]) and philosophers of history alike that "facts cannot as was imagined in the Correspondence account, be simply apprehended, they have to be *established.* (...) A fact is not something which exists whether or not anybody takes any notice of it: it is rather the conclusion of a process of thinking")[21]. This undoubtedly is the case when we take *together* the descriptive and the narrative meaning of narrative statements: the variety of narrative meanings one and the same statement may have in different narratios suggests that what the historical facts are (i.e. what is expressed by narrative statements) always depends on what narrative use is made of the narrative statements in question. Thus there are no facts devoid of narrative interpretation in narratios. There is much truth in this account and we could see it as the narrative counterpart of the thesis of the "theory-ladenness of empirical facts" defended in the philosophy of science. But we should not forget that we must always distinguish between the descriptive and the narrative function of narrative statements. And the descriptive content of narrative statements enables us to interpret them in such a way that we may label them as either true or false (of course with the exception of the type of statements referred to on pp. 179). Not *everything* in history is weak and unstable. Lastly, since historians always use a-theoretical, ordinary

19. This fact has also been recognized by Stephen Humphreys: "(a)ll this raises an interesting possibility: that any given body of documents can validly sustain several themes, and that by analogy any set of events could legitimately support many interpretations". Cf. Stephen Humphreys; p. 10.
20. See Becker; p. 130; a good illustration is also E.H. Carr, *What is history,* London 1961; Chapter I.
21. Walsh (3); p. 77.

language it would be improper to apply the thesis of the "theory-ladenness of empirical facts" to the descriptive content of narrative statements.

The circularity characteristic of historical knowledge mentioned above reflects the fluidity of the line of demarcation between the identity of the things historians write about and what is predicated of those things in the course of narratio. The Renaissance is nothing more and nothing less than what individual historians tell us that it is. Therefore, an account of the Renaissance is quite different from e.g. a description of a physical object: whatever we decide to write down in our historiography on the Renaissance cannot but be true of *our* Renaissance. We cannot *misdescribe* the Renaissance (because there is no such thing), while it is not hard to misdescribe chairs or automobiles. At most we can defy existing historiographical customs, but to a certain extent historians are even obliged to defy such customs. The identity of these narrativist things, i.e. Nss, and their descriptions, i.e. narrative statements, are interchangeable. I think this is what Perelman is referring to with his notion of the so-called "liaisons de coexistence". The relation that exists between the idea of a person (clearly a Ns) and the statements that can be made on his actions is the archetype of these "liaisons de coexistence": there "nous voyons à 1'oeuvre cette curieuse dialectique qui nous permet de tracer le portrait de notre personnage à travers ses actes, ses manifestations de tout genre et puis d'interpréter ses actes et ses arguments à travers 1'idée qu'on a fournie de la personne"[22]. The most salient feature of these "liaisons de coexistence" is "qu'on refuse de voir dans le rapport de la personne et ses actes une simple réplique des rapports entre un object et ses propriétes"[23]. Indeed, whereas the former relation is always analytic the latter is — mostly — synthetic. The metaphorical character of these "liaisons de coexistence" is bound to strike one: the identity of a person, nation, social system or intellectual movement is understood in terms of its actions, decisions, results and vice versa.

(4) *"Scope"*. It has been argued in the preceding section that when we formulate a metaphorical statement or write a narratio, a certain "point of view" is individuated from which part of reality should be seen. In this section I want to indicate somewhat more precisely what these "points of view" are and what their function is in narrative representations of the past.

The "point of view" defined by the metaphorical statement "Stalin was a wolf" could be described, roughly, as follows: "look at Stalin's actions as if they were inspired by cruelty, and base or self-seeking motives". For these are, rightly or wrongly, what we associate with the behaviour of wolves. Even if *actual* wolves were the most peace-loving and altruistic creatures in the world, this would make no difference to the

22. Perelman (1); p. 376.
23. Perelman (1); p. 397.

"point of view" selected by the metaphorical statements. I take locutions like "look at ... as if ..." to be unproblematic. We *can* see things as if they were something else. We can see the features of animals in clouds, or the features of cars in heaps of snow etc. Philosophers have already paid a great deal of attention to this matter (e.g. D.A. Schön).

It should be remembered that metaphorical statements always have two functions: a) they describe the thing the subject-term refers to, and b) they define a "point of view". The metaphorical statement "x is T" (1) has the following two functions: it expresses that "x is ± ø" (2), and "look at S as if it were T" (3). Here "x" refers to a thing in reality and "S" denotes a set of its features not mentioned in either (1) or (2). S is the sum of all those features of x that can be meaningfully compared to what we commonly attribute to, or associate with T. The distinction between x and S should be made because things should be distinguished from (a subset of) their features. I shall now define the *scope* of (1) as the totality of the states of affairs in reality that are described by the sum of all the statements having S as their subject-term. S not being part of the meaning of either (1) or (2), the "point of view"-formulating locution invites us to make statements that cannot be derived from the descriptive meaning of (1): i.e. (2). The statements describing Stalin's individual cruel actions are not part of the meaning of "Stalin was cruel". Thus, following the lead of the "point of view"-formulating locution will yield more information on reality than is contained in the descriptive content of the metaphorical statement, because from the latter we cannot derive statements on the features attributable to its subject-term. Hence we may conclude that the scope of a metaphorical statement is wider than the meaning of its descriptive content.

It should first be noted that only part of reality and not all of it can be identified with what falls within the scope of a metaphorical statement. For example, British constitutional history since 1832 falls beyond the scope of "Stalin was a wolf". The "point of view"-formulating locution sees to that: no meaningful comparison of Stalin with wolves bears upon British constitutional history after 1832. Secondly, the scope of metaphorical statements can only be wider than the meaning of its descriptive meaning thanks to the fact that the "point of view" formulating locution does not *state* what we shall see once we have accepted it. Defining "points of view" differs from describing reality. Because of their larger scope, metaphorical statements have a decisive advantage over literal statements. Just like the descriptive content of metaphors literal statements assert something about reality but because they do not define a "point of view", they lack the comprehensive scope so characteristic of metaphorical statements. Thanks to their "point of view"-formulating function it is possible for metaphorical statements to give a "face" or a "structure" to relatively large parts of reality, but, of course, such "faces" or "structures" should never be seen as being part of reality itself. Giving preference to a certain kind of statement on reality is not

equivalent to asserting something about the nature of reality. Ways of seeing reality are not part of the constitution of reality itself. Lastly, because the essential difference between literal and metaphorical statements lies in the latter's capacity to structure that part of reality which falls within its scope, it seems only reasonable to say that the most successful metaphorical statements are those in which the dissimilarity between scope and descriptive content has been maximalized. Scope-maximalization is the goal of the metaphorical dimension in language.

The above remarks also apply to narratios. The Ns individuated by the narrative statements of a narratio requires us to look at particular parts of historical reality from a certain "point of view". "Look at A as if it were T" means here that we are to formulate those statements on the past that are suggested by T (i.e. a Ns). Or to put it more completely, the narrative statements of the narratio individuate a "point of view" and all the states of affairs described by the statements that can be meaningfully related to the statements of the narratio together constitute the *scope* of the narratio. What statements actually *can* be related meaningfully to the statements of a narratio is of no concern to the philosopher of history. The cultural habits and the socio-psychological characteristics of the people living in a certain historical period, correct or mcorrect (socio-)scientific beliefs, mere common sense and, last but not least, generally accepted historical insights are all responsible for what will be associated with the statements contained in a narratio and thus determine the scope of the Ns of the narratio[24]. Here we enter the domain of sociology and history and leave behind us the realm of the philosophy of history: the philosopher of history merely has to be acquainted with the concept "narrative scope" and with its rôle in narrative historiography. It must be emphasized, therefore, that on no account should the scope of a narratio be identified with the conditions that determine its comprehensiveness. Similarly, the political power of a nation may be due to its economic potential and its military strength, but this does not permit us to equate political power with economic potential and military strength. This argument also epitomizes in a neat way the difference between the psychologistic approach to the narratio and the one followed in this study.

Individuating a narrative "point of view" is expressing a preference for a specific kind of statement on historical reality, but without formulating such statements themselves. "Points of view" do not express what reality is like but which of its aspects should be considered or emphasized for an optimal understanding of the past. With regard to the two Nss on the economic policy of Christian Democracy (cf. p. 217) we may agree that the former invites us to consider statements on the circumstances under which the Belgian Catholic Part abandoned

24. An analysis of some of the details of this question can be found in Miller, especially pp. 203-205. See also G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, *Metaphors we live by,* Chicago 1980; esp. Chapters V-VII.

protectionism, whereas the second Ns suggests the formulation of statements describing the general proliferation of free-trade policies amongst several non-liberal parties in the second half of the 19th century. In both cases we are dealing with statements other than the kind describing the abandonment of protectionism *itself* by the Belgian Catholic Party (i.e. the descriptive content of the Nss that have been roughly sketched as far as the relevant part is concerned). This is what we might call giving a "face" or a "structure" to historical reality. The narrative meaning of a narratio is a proposal as to what possible statements we should select for structuring our ideas on certain historical topics. Therefore the historian's main problem is not what statements he should select for his narratio but rather what *proposal* he should make for selecting statements on some part of the past. The statements a historian uses to propose such a selection-principle are not identical with the statements whose selection is suggested, they only define this selection-principle. A subtle indication, a striking formulation or an artful aside may often prove very successful in doing this, although their descriptive content may be negligible. As was the case with metaphorical statements, the scope of the narratio will be much wider than what is described by the narrative statements and it can be wider because the "point of view" individuated in the narratio does not warrant either the truth or the falsity of the statements describing the states of affairs falling within the scope of the narratio. *Fertility* and not *truth* is our criterion for deciding upon the relative merits of narratios. Narrative use of language is not object language and "points of view" are neither true nor false. The narratio does not *claim* that an inter-connection exists between things or aspects of things in the past - such a claim could be true or false - but only *creates* an inter-connection between the narratio's scope and what is explicitly stated in it.

Consequently, it is not only those parts of historical reality that are explicitly mentioned in the statements of a narratio that make up the scope of its "point of view". Nor is the "point of view" of a narratio merely a *qualification* of the statements of a narratio or of what is expressed by them. It does not make sense to speak of "points of view" on statements; narrative "points of view" are always ways of seeing historical *reality.* The "point of view" of a narratio is comparable to a belvedere: the scope of the "point of view" we get access to after having climbed all the steps leading to the top is far wider than just the staircase of the belvedere: from the top we look out over a whole landscape. The statements of a narratio may be seen as instrumental in our attaining a "point of view" like the steps of the staircase of a belvedere, but what we ultimately see comprises much more of reality than what the statements themselves express. Whatever the weaknesses of historical knowledge may be — and in many respects the historian's cognitive equipment is far less impressive than what his colleague in the exact sciences has at his disposal - we have here found one of the most formidable assets of the historian's methodological inventory.

All this explains, too, why meaningful historical discussions are possible and what their nature is. Historical discussion - in its most typical form - is not about the factual aspects of the past, but about interpretations of the past, i.e. about the question of what "point of view" the past should be seen from. Thus, two historical narratives can properly be said to conflict with each other (i.e. to propose different "points of view") even with regard to aspects of the past that are nowhere explicitly mentioned. This may be due to the scopes of the two narratios having exceeded what is explicitly asserted in their narrative statements. As a result their scopes may considerably overlap, so that a conflict can no longer be denied on the basis of there being no common ground. It may be that there is no statement in Voltaire's *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* which also occurs or is explicitly contradicted in Goubert's *Louis XIV et Vingt Millions de Français,* yet we can say that the two narratios conflict with each other because they propose different "points of view" for the overlapping parts of their scopes.

We can now also answer the question formulated at the beginning of this chapter with regard to the nature of the rules that govern the narratio. The parallelism between metaphorical statements and narratios suggests that the historian should maximalize the scope of his narratio. The most salient feature of narratios is their capacity to individuate "points of view". From these "points of view" certain parts of the past, covered by the scope of the narratio, are "lit up". The wider this scope, the more it exceeds the descriptive meaning of the narrative statements, the more successful a narratio is from a narrativist perspective. It is therefore reasonable to require the historian to maximalize the scope of his narratio. This requirement obviously cannot function as a kind of rule for the construction or the constitution of narratios; it is rather a criterion that enables us to decide on the relative merits of narratios. It tells the historian what goal he should strive for, but not how he can attain it, and therefore is more similar to a command like "try to win!" or "beat the adversary" than to strategic advice as to how to win the game (cf. p. 197).The teleological speculations of the historist should be transformed into a recognition of the goal of the "game" of historiography.

The formulation of this proposal as to how to establish the relative merits of individual narratios is based on what is only suggested by the nature of the narratio and by the parallelism between the narratio and metaphor. Therefore, a more formal proof of its acceptability still has to be put forward. This will be done in Chapter VIII, section (4). In the hope that my argument will be convincing, I shall venture two comments on this proposal now. Maximalizing the scope of the narratio could, of course, be achieved by continually adding new statements to the narratio. However, when I say that the scope of the narratio should be maximalized I mean that the degree to which the narrative exceeds the descriptive meaning of the narrative statements has to be maximalized. A very short narratio may well have been more successful in maximalizing its scope than a verbose one. Secondly, maximalizing the scope of the narratio is not equal to striving for

generality. Generalizing a narratio implies generalizing the descriptive content of the narrative statements and this does not necessarily increase the degree to which the scope of the narratio exceeds its descriptive content. Similarly, it is conceivable that there are narratios on fairly insignificant historical phenomena that have been more successful in maximalizing their scope than many socio-scientific studies of the past.

(5) *Conclusion.* We have been able to show the intrinsically metaphorical character of the narratio by merely making use of the fact that the narratio consists of statements that have a double function. Further, we have discovered the criterion that enables us to establish the relative merits of narratios. I emphasize that this criterion is only an interpretation from the perspective of narrative logic of what is meant when a historian says that narratio N_1 is better than narratio N_2. An investigation of what *makes* him say this or *justifies* his saying it is beyond the narrative logician's competence. Only a purely historical discussion can be decisive here; the province of the philosopher of history and that of the historian should never be confused.

I should like to conclude this chapter by pointing out that the historian's work in a way resembles the construction of metaphysical systems[25]. A philosopher who claims that "reality is water" (Thales) or that "reality is the idea" (Hegel) etc., advocates, just like the historian, a certain "point of view" from which reality should be seen. In this sense I can agree with Croce's assertion that the historian's and the philosopher's activities are very similar[26]. And here we have, lastly, another argument against blind adherence to speculative philosophies of history or to the idea that the acceptance of such speculative philosophies should always be prerequisite for the possibility of narrative historiography (H. Fain and H. White). For these speculative philosophies are metaphysical systems themselves. And it is, as we have seen, the task of the historian to *construct* such views on the past and not to *accept* them. The historian who is content to operate within a Hegelian or Marxist scheme is like the novelist who believes that a good novel should contain a maximum of *clichés* and hackneyed phrases. The historian who is happy to write history only from say, a Marxist "point of view" cannot but finish were he started. I do not doubt that in some cases a properly conducted historical inquiry will yield results that are in harmony with speculative interpretations of history, for scholars like Marx and even more so Hegel[27] possessed an extraordinary historical genius. However, this

25. This resemblance has already been discussed by Walsh. See W.H. Walsh, *Metaphysics,* London 1963; pp. 172 ff..
26. B. Croce, *History. Its theory and practice,* New York 1960; p. 61: "but when chronicle has been reduced to its proper practical and mnemonic function, and history has been raised to the knowledge of the *eternal present,* it reveals itself as all one with philosophy, which for its part is never anything but the thought of the eternal present".
27. Many philophers of history who have rightly criticized Hegel's speculative philosophy of history have shown little interest in how Hegel applied his

should not lead us to conclude that a historian should always seek his inspiration with these speculative philosophies of history. That would be rather like recommending a defective watch because twice in every 24 hours it indicates the right time.

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philosophy of history to history itself. However, Hegel's characterization of e.g. Indian or Egyptian culture, of Mohammedanism and his most remarkable "tour de force" on the conflict between Socrates and the Athenian state (Hegel (2); pp. 638-647) surely belong to the finest examples of narrative historiography. And even Hegel's speculative philosophy of history may be of much use to us. According to this speculative philosophy, reason unfolds itself in the course of human history. The Absolute Spirit, i.e. the recognition of how the universal realizes itself in the individual ("das konkrete Universelle"), lies at the end of the historical process. Translating this speculation on the course of history itself into a theory on historical writing - as we have already done before with historism - amounts to the thesis that the scope of individual Nss should be universalized. And, in fact, Hegel himself already interpreted his speculative philosophy in this way. For he discerns three stages of historical knowing culminating in "philosophical history" (Hegel (1); pp. 3 ff.); these stages run parallel to the three phases in the self-realization of the Spirit in the course of human history.

CHAPTER VIII
EXPLANATION AND OBJECTIVITY IN HISTORY AND NARRATIVE SUBSTANCES

It might be worthwhile trying to solve some of the traditional problems in the philosophy of history with the help of the insight we have gained in the preceding chapters. Historical explanation and objectivity will be dealt with because current philosophy of history (in both the Continental and the Anglo-Saxon style) shows a strong predilection for these two topics. Moreover, when discussing the objectivity of history I hope to demonstrate that requiring the narratio to maximalize its scope above and beyond its descriptive content yields the best criterion for deciding upon the relative merits of individual narratios.

(1) *Some general remarks on explanation.* When do we explain? Explanations can only be asked for and given if it is conceivable that things might have been different from what they actually are or were. The assertion that things might have been different from what they actually are or were can have two meanings, the first of which being that all the regularities we have discovered up till now for objective reality might have been different. This, again, is an ambiguous statement. First of all, it may mean that we might have "covered" our actual world with regularities and physical laws different from those whose validity we shall presently believe in. Such a situation we can very well conceive of - in fact, it is even a condition for progress in scientific research. Science can only proceed when we are ready, if it should seem feasible, to "cover" reality with laws different from those we have accepted for the time being. Thus the acceptance of a different set of scientific laws does not in the least imply scepticism with regard to the possibility of explaining reality. Another possible meaning of the ambiguous statement is that nature itself shows a different and abnormal kind of behaviour. If such an abnormal world displays a certain order — like our own — there is no reason to doubt that we can ultimately find out about it. Consequently, in such a world specific states of affairs could also be explained.

But could we conceive of a dis-orderly universe? I do not have in mind a universe whose laws are unknown to us (an "idealistic" interpretation of the concept "dis-orderly universe"), but a universe that lacks order itself. Certainly we could form an *idea* of such a universe: we could imagine a universe ruled from one moment to the next by a different set of physical laws, with chance deciding which set it will be (God dices). It may be wondered whether scientists from an "orderly" universe will ever find out what is going on in such an astonishing world: probably they will only come to the conclusion that it is very hard to investigate this world scientifically. And a fundamental objection is that the

proposed idea for this dis-orderly universe is quite inept. It apparently has parliamentary legislation as its model. But physical reality is not "governed" by physical laws; neither will it be clear what this substrate could be that seems to be independent of those sets of physical laws but can be "governed" by each of them separately. The suggestion clearly is that nature, essentially, can be compared to a nation that is governed by continually changing laws.

I do admit that my model for a dis-orderly universe is a very naive one. However, physical laws are synthetical statements, so they might have been different. Thus, the idea of a dis-orderly universe does not seem inconsistent to me, although it may be true that the implementation of this idea will probably require much more sophistication than I have displayed here. Anyway, whatever model of a dis-orderly universe one may prefer, all I want to claim is that in such a universe the existence of certain states of affairs can no longer be explained. And we may conclude that explanations can only be given in worlds that *themselves* show a certain minimum amount of order (once more, the term "order" should not be interpreted here in an idealist way).

Fortunately, this kind of dis-orderly universe has nothing in common with the world that is the present object of the sciences. In nature and in the experiences of daily life we have discovered a large number of quite reliable general rules which are always a useful and even indispensable guide for human action. Hence, we may rather obviously claim that states of affairs in our world can be explained (for instance, along the lines of the CLM; it should be remembered that I have only stated that the CLM is not an acceptable model for the *narratio*\). Then, how could the phrase "that things might have been different" be interpreted from the perspective of our own world? It is of great importance to find an answer to this question, because, as was observed on p. 227, explanations can only be given if it is conceivable that things might have been different from what they actually happen to be. We may ask for explanations in our own world when thanks to our general knowledge of our world and the general concepts we use we can imagine that our world might have been different. It is not hard to imagine a world that is quite different from our actual world even though in this other world the same laws obtain and the same general concepts prove to be useful. In fact, these unchanging laws and general concepts are even indispensable when we wish to imagine a world different from ours. These general concepts and laws actually *determine* what different permutations of the elements of our world can possibly be conceived of. And the total set of these permutations yields the total set of all the possible worlds to which the laws and general concepts valid for our actual world can be applied. Our world being one out of this total set, we can meaningfully ask for explanations of states of affairs that obtain in our world (our world might have been different, i.e. might have been some other possible world). Thus we arrive at the curious conclusion that the very same laws and general concepts that help us to explain our world are also responsible

for the fact that we are sometimes at a loss in our world and look for explanations.

Thanks to the generality of laws and concepts, we can form the idea of other possible worlds. In this connection, I think the assertion made in the previous paragraph should be narrowed down a little. It is certainly true that laws are indispensable for explaining our world. Nevertheless, the general concepts we use, whatever their origin, are already sufficient in themselves to enable us to conceive of other possible worlds. Moreover, the most successful explanations, i.e. the explanations that are based upon the results of the most theoretical exact sciences, always make use of general concepts whose meaning is determined by the general law-statements in which they occur. So we can say that we should have general concepts at our disposal in order to be able to ask for explanations. Without general concepts we can only blindly accept the world as it is. A world (even if it is ours) that is only spoken of with the help of proper names, while all general concepts — i.e. possible predicates — have been discarded, would be, of all worlds the one most bound by necessity: we could not even formulate and understand questions on such a world. Here everything must be as it is.

It is not hard to imagine what the language for such a world would have to be like. We can think of a language for our world which is modelled on our existing language, but which contains only the names of the statements we make. Thus the statement "P is red at t_1" is called "a", the statement "Q is square at t_2 " is called "b", the statement "P is round at t_1" is called "c" and so on. People who are omniscient with regard to the history of our universe could have a meaningful conversation by only mentioning these names. Of course their memories would have to be very good too so that they could retain what all these names stand for. Indeed, they would have to be rather god-like creatures. These language-users would be convinced of the necessity and the fatality of everything that happened in their world, although it would be impossible for them to express such a conviction. Anyway, *we* know that this is how they experience reality. We may also assert that they will be solipsists because of the absence of contingencies in their world (see p. 186 ff.).

I am afraid that these god-like language-users would soon get into trouble. First, there is the problem of how their language could be learned. For instance, in order to distinguish the statement "a": "P is red at t_1" from the statement "c": "P is round at t_1" the knowledge of general concepts seems indispensable. However, once they know what the two names "a" and "c" refer to, our language-users no longer need knowledge of general concepts. Knowledge of what a name refers to does not require general knowledge. Knowing the difference between what "a" and "c" refer to need not imply *general* knowledge: the generality implicit in these "modifications" (to say it in a Leibnizian way) "P-redness" and "P-roundness" is logically dependent upon the use of these names. We could imagine one of these god-like language-users making the bewildering

discovery one day that there is something which "P-redness", "Q-redness" and "R-redness" have in common — and a world-picture falls to the ground. Consequently, if we add the supposition that our language-users must have learned their language in the ordinary way, i.e. with the help of general concepts and the like, but that they suddenly forgot how they initially acquired their knowledge of what these names refer to, everything seems to be in order agains.

There is another problem. I said that "a", "b", "c" etc. were the names *of statements.* Most probably our language-users would consider this assertion regarding their language and their world a quite preposterous one. They would reject statements as logical monstrosities and argue that their names refer directly to reality, its "P-redness", its "P-roundness" etc.. From their point of view names would refer to things in reality and "things" would be to them what aspects of things are to us. But can "a", "b", "c" etc. really be said to refer to these admittedly peculiar things? More particularly, can we be sure that no problems would arise with regard to the referential capacity of "a", "b", "c" etc.? For instance, after having removed the statements from our analysis, can we be quite convinced that a thing has a certain aspect only "once"? Why not twice, or a thousand times? That would require far more names, and it would be impossible to distinguish what each refers to. Furthermore, we should be aware that the names "a", "b", "c" etc. can have no meaning for our language-users (assuming that in a certain context names can have meanings at all). For the only meaning these names could possibly have - the meaning of the statements they refer to — could not be understood by our language-users. So they may have a great many names for one and the same state of affairs or aspect of a thing without ever being aware of it, which seriously threatens the referential capacity of the names they use. More importantly, these language-users could never be sure that they would use the right name for the right "thing". Thus, if "a" refers to "P-redness at t_1 " and "c" to "P-roundness at t_1", how could they know that such names had not been misused, e.g. when "P-roundness at t_1" is referred to by "a", assuming that both names actually apply to one or more aspects of reality? Their memory would be all they had to rely upon. And memory being the only criterion in disputes on what names refer to, it would seem to us that their language, contrary to what they would believe themselves, does not refer to reality but to their states of consciousness. Memories and not reality itself is what really is at stake in such disputes. The memories our language-users have when hearing such a name and not reality itself is what is referred to by these names. Of course, with a view to the argument in Chapter VI, section (3) where it was shown that statements as such do not refer to reality, this can no longer astonish us.

(2) *Historical explanation.* The anomalies of this hypothetical language consisting of only proper names disappear as soon as we replace our god-like language-users by ordinary historians. To liken historians to gods is, for that matter, not merely flattery. Leibniz appointed to God the task

(and the capacity) of figuring out what sequence of realized states of affairs would result in the most harmonious universe. Similarly, the historian has to figure out which sequence of statements on the past will result in the most harmonious narratio. Indeed, when the historian is writing history he may be regarded as a kind of god, although, of course, the Leibnizian God deals with actual states of affairs while the historian only works with descriptions of them.

This difference also suggests how we can solve the problem that brought the preceding section to such a sad conclusion. As we have seen, our god-like speakers could have meaningful discussions: although each of them knew all the possible statements on the past (or at any rate an enormous number of such statements), their discussions were not necessarily just idle enumerations of the recollections they all shared. We have described narratios as sets of statements on the past: so these god-like creatures could very well carry on a historical discussion similar to those actually carried on by historians. The difficulty, however, was that due to the lack of referential capacity of the names they used, their conversations ceased to be conversations on the past. They did not discuss the past, but their memories.

The trouble that arose at the end of the preceding section was caused by the disappearance of the statements from the scene. In narrative historiography we do not ran this risk. For the statements in a narratio have a double function: 1) they individuate a Ns (and that is the sole function of narrative statements left in the language of the god-like creatures) and 2) they describe reality. Thus, the narratio, when we take its descriptivist aspects into consideration, does refer to reality (thanks to the subjects of its statements) and the ambiguities mentioned at the end of the preceding section cannot arise in the case of the narratio.

But let us now consider the narratio from a narrativist perspective. In its own peculiar way the narratio attempts to explain the past. Phenomena, however, are not explained as such but always in a description that has been offered of them. This implies that if we are looking for the explanatory force of the narratio we are, in fact, asking why we ought to accept a narrative *account* of the past. Is the logical form of narrative explanation such that we cannot but accept an explanation having this form? Similarly, we accept CLM-explanations of what historical research has discovered, since in such explanations the explanandum is logically entailed in the explanans. The necessity reigning on the *linguistic* level guarantees that phenomena in *reality* have been explained.

If we bear this in mind, our search for the explanatory force of the narratio is equivalent to the question as to whether necessity reigns in the narrativist universe. If, then, a Ns (the linguistic device we use for explaining part of the past) were to contain a different set of statements than the one it actually possesses, while essentially remaining the same Ns, we could not have confidence in the explanatory force of this Ns. Different sets of statements would correspond with different scopes and therefore with different aspects of the past. But if a Ns explains different pasts it

explains no past. Therefore, if Nss are supposed to explain the past, no looseness will be allowed with regard to what the properties of a Ns are (i.e. with regard to what statements a Ns contains). Nss have to be what they are. So asking for the explanatory force of Nss is equivalent to the question as to whether necessity reigns in the narrativist universe, that is, whether Nss might not be different from what they actually are.

So let us consider the problem of whether the properties of a Ns might be different from what they actually are. Of course, with regard to "things" other than Nss this question can usually be answered in the affirmative. However, and this is the crucial point, with regard to Nss such a question can *never* be answered affirmatively. Whichever Ns we may choose, none could ever be different from what it is, without ceasing to be the Ns it is. Nss are completely and unambiguously individuated by *all* their properties (i.e. all the statements they contain); as soon as one statement is omitted or added we have to do with a different Ns. Consequently, we cannot meaningfully ask whether Nss could have been different (such questions would require us to consider self-contradictory statements on Nss), they are necessarily the way they are. Thus, when the *past* (i.e. *not* Nss) is described in terms (of the narrative statements) of Nss, we can say that the *past* has been explained, because the Nss embodying such an explanation could not have been different. The explanandum (i.e. part of the past) is explained by that which defines the narratio's scope (i.e. the statements contained in a Ns). And the necessity that reigns in the narrativist universe forces us to accept these narrative accounts of the past, just as the necessity that ties together explanans and explanandum forces us to accept explanations that conform to the CLM. Of course, what is explained (and might have been different) should not be confused with the logical structure of the explanations (which could not have been different): things in the past might have been different but this does not obtain for the Ns(s) which explain them. The immense complexity even of a simple narratio as an explanatory device when compared to a CLM-explanation, should not make us forget this. Lastly, it will be observed that narrative explanation does not support prediction.

Of course we could decree that only explanations of the CLM-type should be called "explanations" but this would be a very parochial approach indeed. For historical narratios do explain the past in a way that has satisfied many generations of historians and a wide lay-public for a long time. Moreover, as was shown in the preceding paragraphs, logic forces us to accept (historical) explanations that are given in terms of Nss. And if we are ready to accept the historical, narrative explanation as a proper sort of explanation, we can conclude that we are able to explain the past without having recourse, either implicitly or explicitly, to general law-statements. It is a well-known fact that the CLM-debate always got into difficulties because of the obvious absence of general laws in historical explanations. In spite of many ingenious adaptations, the efforts to bring the CLM sufficiently close to historical practice have always failed. Now we know what caused the *échec* of the CLM: a set of singular statements may be

sufficient to give a historical explanation. And we are now also aware of the deeper cause of the CLM-ist's predicament: for him, "explaining" could only be the explanation of the presence or absence of certain states of affairs in reality. However, the historian can also explain the past in another way, viz. by "seeing it in the terms" of a certain Ns. At *this* level narratios are self-explanatory. Once more, I do not deny that the CLM may have its value on the level of historical *research,* but as soon as we reach the level of the writing of narrative history another explanatory model that dispenses with general laws takes over.

Lastly, the difference between the correct logical *form* of a narrativist explanations and its *implementation* in the case of individual narrative explanations should not be neglected. *All* acceptable narra-tivist explanations should conform to the logical model just expounded, and they do so when a Ns is individuated in the corresponding narratio. But that does not imply anything with regard to their relative merits in the eyes of historians. Although two narratios may fulfil the requirements mentioned above, the historian may on account of specific historiographical considerations, prefer one narratio to the other. And a similar claim also holds for the CLM. This may be illustrated by the following time-honoured example. It is asked why the flowers in a garden have died. The following explanations can be conceived of: 1) the soil was too dry, 2) too little rain had fallen, 3) the gardener had forgotten to water the flowers. Each of these three explanations is unexceptionable from the perspective of the CLM; nevertheless, the third explanation is very likely to be the one we are interested in. For explanations to be acceptable it is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one that they should be formulated in accordance with some explanatory model. The CLM and the narrativist explanatory model that was sketched above both belong to the realm of logic or of the philosophy of science and not to that of actual scientific or historiographical practice. Thus, our narrativist explanatory model should never be seen as an instrument that can help us in deciding on the relative merits of individual historical explanations. Evolutions in historiography are not inspired by attempts to approach as much as possible the pure form of the narrativist explanatory model. The arguments that make historians prefer one historical, narrativist explanation of the past to another one have nothing to do with the claim made in this section concerning the proper logical form of narrativist explanations. As soon as we confuse the job of the philosopher with that of the historian we will find ourselves in a terrible muddle. Philosophical arguments can never be decisive in historical discussions.

(3) *Some general remarks on subjectivity and objectivity.* Unambiguous literal statements can be said to be either true or false. In Chapter III we rejected the proposal to speak of the "truth" or the "falsity of narratios". Instead of the terms "truth" and "falsity" I shall propose the terms "objective" and "subjective" as indications of the relative acceptability or adequacy of narratios; these terms can also be used to appraise the kind of statements mentioned on p. 179. Both in ordinary

speach and in philosophical language these terms do already have many of the connotations I wish to give to them in this connection. Nevertheless I hesitate to use the concepts "objective" and "subjective", since they are as a rule exclusively associated with discussions on the rôle of values in history.

In my opinion it is necessary to distinguish between two contexts:

"... is subjective" (a) and "... is influenced by moral values" (b). That this distinction ought to be made is already clear from the fact that *texts* but not *human beings* (e.g. historians) can be called "subjective" (a), whereas *human beings* and not *texts* can be influenced by values (b). Admittedly, when a historian is influenced by values (b), his historiography *can* be subjective (a), but that does not alter the fact that we should be careful to keep these two contexts apart. Moreover, a historiography may be "subjective" for a number of reasons other than that its author was influenced by values. Indeed, aesthetic preferences, stylistic habits, lack of imagination or congeniality with a certain subject-matter or just sheer incompetence may also make an author's historiography "subjective". As a matter of fact, it is quite astonishing that the term "subjective" should always have been linked so exclusively with ethical and political values.

Anyway, the terms "subjective" and "objective" belong to the domain of the narratio: they are terms that express something about the relative acceptability or adequacy of narratios — even in common parlance. When we speak of "being influenced by values, by aesthetical preferences, by certain interests" and so on, we are trying to find some psychological explanation for the relative merits or shortcomings of a particular narratio. And even though what is said in context (a) will usually have its correlate in context (b), that should not lead us to neglect the distinction between the two contexts. Even if the content of the narratio could be completely explained by resorting to the psychological, sociological, ethical and aesthetical characteristics of its author, the distinction would not be obliterated. For the "objective" narratio ought to be conceived of in cognitive terms and not in psychological, sociological or aesthetical ones. We may conclude that even in common parlance the term "objective", when applied to a narratio, refers to its cognitive adequacy and not to parts of the personal biography of a historian. Therefore, we do not conflict with the connotations which the terms "subjective" and "objective" do already have when we use them as indications of the relative merits or shortcomings of narratios *as narratios.*

(4) *Subjectivity and objectivity in history.* When we use the terms "subjective" and "objective" two things may come to mind 1) the narratio itself, and 2) the correspondence between the narratio and historical reality. It may seem doubtful that component 1) should be really indispensable. Couldn't we qualify some arbitrary list containing true statements on the past as "chaotic, but objective"? In other words, at first sight it seems sufficient for a naratio to be objective, that its statements should correspond with the actual states of affairs in

historical reality. Hence, no additional demands in the sphere of component 1) would seem necessary. Yet, I don't think that this idea will generally meet with agreement. It could be argued that this arbitrary list of statements is subjective because the selection of the statements to be included was not guided by historical reality. Therefore, the list in question is already at variance with component 2), the component which was initially thought to be sufficient. Thus, when we are considering what is meant by the phrase "the objective narratio" the narratio itself will have to be taken into account as well. We cannot restrict ourselves to merely considering the correspondence between the individual statements in a narratio and those parts of historical reality described by them.

It may be argued, however, that I have interpreted component 2) in a very specific sense. Component 2), which requires the correspondence between the narratio and historical reality, was interpreted — at the end of the preceding paragraph — as a correspondence between the *individual* statements of the narratio and historical reality, which is an interpretation not necessarily justified by the wording of component 2). Another possible interpretation is that there ought to be a correspondence between the narratio *when taken as a narrative whole* and historical reality. Then the "objective" narratio should be defined as the narratio which *in its totality* corresponds to historical reality. I presume that most historians and philosophers of history will be reasonably satisfied with this proposed definition of the "objective" narratio. Of course, they may differ with regard to details, but on the whole it will be acceptable to most of them.

However, with a view to the claims of narrative realism it is not very hard to identify the mistake in the above proposal. The idea that the historian should offer a narrative "translation" of what the past really is like is the misunderstanding that this and similar proposals have in common. For there are no translation-rules which, when carefully applied, can guarantee the objectivity of a narratio. The past is not simply reflected in the narratio; therefore the phrase "the correspondence between the narratio when taken as a narrative whole and historical reality" is devoid of meaning. Our previous arguments refuting the phrases "truth" or "falsity of the narratio" and the notion of the "lack of fixity" that exists in historiography between accounts of the past and the past itself can be recalled in this connection (pp. 71 ff.). The foregoing considerations and especially our continued resistance to narrative realism may have demonstrated that the concept "the objectivity of the narratio" can be given no acceptable content if only component 2) is taken into account. So, in order to give meaning to the concept "the objectivity of the narratio" we shall now have to concentrate on the first component.

Following a suggestion made by Kupperman in a somewhat similar context,[1] we could interpret the concept "the objective narratio" in either of two ways: 1) in an *absolute* sense (i.e. there is one and only one

1. J.J. Kupperman, Precision in history, *Mind* LXXXIV (1975) 372-390; see especially pp. 377 ff..

objective narratio on and around a certain historical topic, and this objective narratio can serve as a criterion for establishing the objectivity of other narratios on or around the same historical topic), and 2) in a *relative* sense (there is no objective narratio that is given to us as an absolute criterion: we only possess a number of narratios on or around a historical topic and by comparing them mutually we may hope to find out which of them is most objective). Let us first scrutinize the concept "objective narratio" when taken in the absolutist sense. It may seem that the idea that there could be such an *absolutely* objective narratio could very well be criticized using the same arguments as we used to contest narrative realism and the claim that component 2) could give meaning to the concept "the objectivity of the narratio". But I am afraid that we shall not get away with things so easily. We have always argued that *no* narratios come into being thanks to the application of translation-rules, so even the objective narratio in the absolutist sense (assuming that there is such a narratio) cannot be said to have been constructed with the help of these translation-rules. Consequently, a repetition of our critique of the translation-rules can be of no help in this connection.

We can interpret the concept "the objective narratio" in the absolutist sense in two ways. Either there are rules that ensure the constitution of the objective narratio in the absolutist sense or there are rules or criteria that enable us to single out this narratio from others. The first interpretation has already been rejected in the previous chapter, when it was shown that general rules never yield the Nss proposed in narratios. With regard to the second interpretation we must be aware that the number of possible narratios on or around a historical topic is infinite. Hence, it is always logically conceivable that next to a certain narratio, which we at first regarded as the objective narratio in the absolutist sense can be put another narratio that satisfies even better the criteria for the objective narratio in the absolutist sence. We can never be *sure* that a particular narratio really *is* the most objective narratio on a topic in the absolutist sense. This argument can be seen as the ultimate defeat of the attempt to come to some acceptable definition of the concept "the Ideal Narratio".

That leaves us with the second interpretation of the concept "the objective narratio": only if a number of narratios (i.e. Nss) are at our disposal can we select the most objective one *of this set.* Here we shall not encounter the difficulties that confronted us when we were considering the first interpretation of the concept. In fact, I am convinced that this not very exciting criterion of the objectivity of narratios is the most reasonable one. It may be asked, then, how we can establish the relative objectivity of narratios. That is, how do we select the most objective narratio from a set of competing narratios on or around a historical topic? Because in this discussion on the objectivity of the narratio we have restricted ourselves to component 1), we must read this question as follows: what criteria enable us to select the most objective narratio from a set of competing narratios on or around a historical topic when we consider these narratios purely from a narrativist perspective, that is, without taking into account in this context

their "correspondence with historical reality" (the second component)?

Once again we have to remember that the narrative statements of a narratio have two functions: to describe historical reality and to individuate a "point of view" (or Ns). Clearly, the "correspondence with historical reality" is secured by the first function. Thus our argument in the preceding paragraphs proves that the "objectivity of the narratio" has to be associated with the "point of view" function of the narrative statements of the narratio. It must be noted that whenever we compare narratios it is not their "points of view" but their *scopes* which are compared. In contrast to their scopes, narrative "points of view" do not have a common background in terms of which they can be compared. We can meaningfully compare two narratios on Louis XIV (e.g. one by Goubert and one by Voltaire) even when their "points of view" (i.e. their respective Nss as individuated by the statements of the narratio) have nothing in common. Similarly, when it is said that one has a better view of a landscape from position P_1 than from P_2, it is not these positions themselves but what is seen from them that can sustain the assertion. As a consequence, when we accept that it is the historian's task to provide the most comprehensive account of (part of) the past, we should say that the best, the most adequate or the most *objective* narratio out of a set of competing narratios on or around a historical topic is the narratio of which the scope beyond its descriptive content has been maximalized (other things being equal). Before considering the scope-maximalization criterion, I wish to make a few comments that may clarify my intentions.

In the practice of history scope-maximalization can be achieved in the following way. Narratios are ways of seeing the past. So what a set of narratios on roughly the same topic have in common - what I shall call their "conventionalist" component - is not part of the way each individual narratio in the set proposes to see the past. Only in so far as there are differences can we speak of ways of seeing the past. We can be sure, therefore, that the "point of view" proposed in a narratio can only be identified with those parts of the narratio in which it differs from other narratios. For obvious reasons the same is true for the scope of the narratio, so that reducing the conventionalist component in a narratio may be said to be equivalent to enlarging its scope. Those narrative components that continually recur in narratios on or around a certain historical topic will eventually give way to in-tensional typifications. As a consequence the narratios with a conventionalist component will split up into an un-historical part in which reference is made to one or more individual things of a certain type and another truly narrative part embodying the scope of the narratio. The most objective narratio, the narratio having the widest scope, is the least conventionalist, the most *original* narratio. Thus, the essential duty of the historian is to be original and to refrain as much as possible from repeating what his predecessors in the investigation of a particular topic have said. The requirement that the historian should maximalize the scope of his narratio could be interpreted as a plea for an "integral history", i.e. a historiography that subsumes in one narratio all that has been found by

the subdisciplines of history on the intellectual, political, social or economical "layers" of the historical past. Specialization leads to subjective historiography (of course, I do not deny that more often than not, a close investigation of the details of the past is a necessary condition for the production of an objective narratio). But in historiography specialization should always be regarded with the utmost suspicion; it could best be seen as "une terrible necessite".

To maximalize the scope of a narratio is not merely to *claim* for a narratio a more comprehensive "image" or "picture" of the past than for competing ones in the absence of an *argument* for this claim. In historiography a historical thesis and the arguments in favour of it are inseparable (cf. pp. 46-7). Conclusions cannot be detached from their narrative support. Consequently, we cannot assert of a narratio both a) that it is badly argumented and b) that it has a wide scope. These two statements are mutually exclusive. Historiography knows no lucky guesses.

One of the most curious implications of the preceding argument is that other narratios are indispensable for deciding on the scope, and therefore on the objectivity of a narratio. It is impossible to decide on the objectivity of a narratio if only one (or a standard) narratio is available on a topic. In other words, the more Nss have in common in a particular phase of the development of historiography, the more manifest is the decline of historical knowledge (the essence of which is to formulate "points of view") in such a period. The victory of narrative realism (under the guise either of an exclusively socio-scientific historiography or of a historiography drawing its inspiration only from speculative philosophies of history) would initiate such a decay of historical knowledge. Under such circumstances the prevalence of *one* view of the past has resulted in the disappearance of *any* view of the past. And this is not merely an *interpretation* but a *description* of a state of affairs in historiography: "points of view" on the past can only exist as long as there are other "points of view". Nss can only be recognized as such if their specificity is acknowledged and actively striven for. Being aware of the possibility of other views of the past is an essential part of the meaning of "having knowledge of the past". For example, the more narratios we have on the French Revolution the deeper our insight into it will be, not primarily because each narratio will mention facts not mentioned in others but because only the presence of other narratios enables us to draw the contours and to recognize the specificity of the view of the past presented in each narratio. Historical insight is only achieved when the contours of our view of the past are as clear as possible (of course, this always is a matter of degree). Therefore, the realization of a "full" narrativist universe would be the requirement for complete historical knowledge. In such a full universe in which Leibniz's principle of plenitude has been realized, the presence of each Ns is a necessary condition for the specificity of each other Ns contained in the universe[2].

2. We might paraphrase Leibniz as follows: "For everything is a plenum, so that all

Thus we can subscribe to the Leibnizian theses 1) that each substance is a reflection of all the other substances and vice versa and 2) that a perfect universe is the richest universe. The omission of only one substance from it, the missing of only one link in this "Great Chain of Being", renders the remaining substances imperfect and obscure. In short, the scope of a Ns is predominantly determined by *other* Nss and not by itself. And the degree of perfection of a Ns depends on the degree of perfection of the narrativist universe of which it is part. In the same vein we might add that 1) an optimal awareness of the identities of other people and 2) a maximal variety in these identities are the necessary conditions for the development of our own identity. This implies, of course, a critique of the atomistic individualism characteristic of most of liberal political theory.

Freedom of thought therefore is an essential methodological requirement for the very possibility of historical knowledge. Moreover, the past has to be covered with a network of narratios whose overlappings enable us to decide on the objectivity of narratios on relatively new historical topics. This also explains why historiography is actually much more of a collective enterprise than e.g. physics, although history is mostly written by solitary academics in the seclusion of their studies. One single man can discover truths about nature, but the possibility of knowledge of the past requires the presence of and the opposition to competing insights in a much more dramatic way. Consequently, the function of the so-called "forum the scientists"[3] is quite different from that of the "forum of the historians". The former decides on the acceptability of the results of scientific research, while the latter is a necessary point of departure for gaining historical knowledge — and as such it is absolutely indispensable. This is why historiography is rightly considered to be part of the culture or civilization of a period, whereas physics is not.

In Chapter II, section (2) we saw that different morally inspired views of the future generate different interpretations of the past. Since each interpretation was meant to further the cause of some model of the future, rational discussion did not permit us to decide on the merits of these interpretations. However, when ethically inspired interpretations of

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Nss are bound together, and every motion in this plenum has some effect upon distant Nss in proportion to their distance, in such a way that every Ns not only is affected by those which touch it and somehow feels whatever happens to them but is also, by means of them, sensitive to others which adjoin those by which it is immediately touched. It follows that this communication extends to any distance whatever. As a result, every Ns responds to everything which happens in the universe, so that he who sees all could read in each everything that happens anywhere, and, indeed, even what has happened and what will happen, observing in the present all that is removed from it, whether in space or in time. 'All things are conspirant', as Hippocrates said". See Leibniz (2); p. 649.

3. De Groot; Chapter 1, section (1; 3; 5): the "forum" of all the scientists specialized in a certain domain of science decides upon the acceptability of theories and/or hypotheses.

the past are not measured with the yard-stick of the future societies they help to construct, it is not a priori impossible to evaluate their objectivity. Because I have separated the terms "objective" and "subjective" entirely from the *causes* that may give rise to narratios either objective or subjective (e.g. the moral beliefs of the historian), it is not contradictory to say that an objective narratio has been inspired by certain ethical or political values. Ethical values (or other extra-historical conditions) may inspire the historian to write a specific (kind of) narratio on the past, but that need not prevent us from deciding on its (their) relative objectivity. The scope-criterion is as effective in this case as in any other. I think, therefore, that it is both unnecessary and unreasonable to demand of the historian that he should shed all his ethical and political commitments when he starts to write history: adherence to an ethical position may occasionally yield narratios with an unusually wide scope. "No bias, no book", as Michael Howard succinctly put it[4]. It is a platitude to say that the moral condemnation of the totalitarian state has done much to deepen our historical knowledge of this phenomenon. Of course, ethical commitments are not a *necessary* condition for maximalizing the scope of narratios, nor is their scope enlarged by the mere utterance of moral beliefs.

This is in accordance with the practice of historical discussion. The objectivity of historical accounts that are inspired by ethical or political values can very well be assessed in historical discussions, even of accounts in which the influence of values is most pertinent and very clearly visible. Thus, it is often said that precisely his adherence to certain ethical or political values has blinded or opened the eyes of a particular historian regarding certain aspects of the past. In many such cases the influence of values may not be merely *causal* (in the sense of having *caused* the historian to take a certain view of the past). Historical "points of view" — which determine, as we have seen, the entire structure of narrative accounts of the past — may often be inextricably tied up with political or ethical values. Many narratios lose their internal consistency when robbed of the political values which structure them. Moreover, there is a natural affinity between the narratio and ethical or political values. The metaphorical component of a narratio defines a "point of view" suggesting a particular kind of action. The same can be said of ethical and political values. The narratio is the *trait d'union* between description and normativeness: on the one hand we have a set of descriptive statements, on the other a course of action is recommended[5]. We might even toy with the idea that historiography may enable us to test ethical and political values. If a certain set of political or ethical values were to consistently yield more objective narratios, narratios with a

4. M. Howard, Lords of destruction, *Times Literary Supplement*, 13-11-'81; p. 1323.
5. See also Schön (2): p. 268, "Through the processes of naming and framing, the stories make what Rein and Schön have called the 'normative leap from data to recommendations, from fact to values, from 'is' to 'ought' '."

wider scope than those inspired by another set, this would certainly be a strong argument in favour of the former. I agree that the fundamental weakness in historiographical knowledge lies in the fact that the assessment of the scope of a narratio will also be influenced by values. The fact that the scope of a narratio can only be established — as we have seen — by comparing it with other competing narratios requires familiarity with specific historical traditions. Such historical traditions are closely connected with the political and ethical ideals of the cultural and national "Umwelt" in which they arise. Nevertheless, the scope-criterion itself is not logically connected with ethical or political values and is therefore, in essence, value-free. So all that historians and philosophers of history can do is to hope for an open-minded and un-censored historical discussion. Once more we are confronted with the methodological necessity of the freedom of historical inquiry.

I shall now consider the most obvious objection that can be raised regarding my proposal to define the most objective narratio of a set of competing narratios on or around a certain topic as the narratio of which the scope beyond its descriptive meaning has been maximalized. It will be argued that the obligation to maximalize the scope of the narratio requires the historian to *suggest* as much as possible, but *explicitly* to say as little as possible. This seems to reduce historiography to propaganda: propaganda and tendentious reports suggest much but prove litte. It is not my intention to refute this criticism. To put it provocatively, I believe that the most objective narratio is the narratio that comes closest to propaganda (however, without ever *becoming* propaganda). The following considerations may clarify this unprepossessing proposition.

According to narrative realism the narratio is a reflection, a narrative reproduction of the past as it actually was. The past has neither heart nor kernel (in the narrativist sense): the past itself is not a narratio. Therefore, according to narrative realism, each theory and each thesis on the past will bear the traces of the hands of the historian who wrote the account of the past containing such theories or theses, so that such an account is bound to be subjective. According to narrative realism, *those* narratios must be most objective that have neither heart nor kernel (like the past itself), and that meander along in the same unpredictable and disorganized way as the past itself. For narrative idealism, on the other hand, moving away from historical reality itself, seeing it from as large a distance as possible, is a prerequisite for attaining objectivity. The narrativist realist's route to subjectivity is the narrative idealist's route to objectivity and vice versa. Narrative idealism separates the level of statements on the past and the level of narrative interpretations of the past; thus it creates the logical space that is needed for views on or interpretations of the past to be formulated and recognized as such. Narrative realism has coalesced these two levels, as a result of which an objective interpretation of the past can be no more than a so-called "reproduction" of the past, a reproduction that is necessarily as unclear

and incomprehensible as the actual past that it should help to elucidate.

Creating, in conformity with narrative idealism, a maximal distance between the narratio and historical reality (which is a metaphorical way of saying that the scope of the narratio in respect of its descriptive content must be maximalized) does not in the least imply the elimination of every check on the relative adequacy of the narratio thus constituted. On the contrary it is precisely the narrative idealist's strategy that makes narratios vulnerable. The narratio that is apt to please the narrative realist can hardly be confirmed or falsified (I may for once be permitted to borrow these terms from so remote a field as the philosophy of science)[6]. Hosts and hosts of statements will be needed to confirm or falsify the extremely weak core of such a narratio. Obviously, when there is hardly any narrative core there is hardly anything to be confirmed or falsified. It is much easier, however, to test the adequacy of narratios written in the narrative idealist vein: taking into account only a few historical facts may sometimes be sufficient to discredit a narrative idealist historical thesis. For instance, Venturi's interesting thesis that much of 18th century political thought should be seen as a defence of republican ideas rather than of democratic ideas loses much of its plausibility when it is pointed out that 18th century political theorists were very much aware of the intrinsic weaknesses of the Venetian, Genevan, Genoese and Dutch republics[7].

However, the claim made in the previous paragraph, that *statements* should sometimes confirm or falsify narratios, needs some qualification. The relative fruitfulness of the Nss proposed by the narrative idealist historian cannot be vindicated or denied merely by recourse to statements (whether or not belonging to these Nss). This can only be done by recourse to other Nss. We can only determine the (relative) merits of a narratio by comparing it with other *narratios*. Looking for the most objective narratio is to some extent similar to selecting the best hi-fi installation: we don't compare these installations with what we actually hear in the concert-hall, but with other installations. Likewise, the light of objectivity in the narratio shines, as it were, from *within,* it is not a correspondence with actual historical reality that *makes* it shine. This does not mean that actual historical reality should not enter into it when we are looking for the most objective narratio or Ns: when we compare two Nss, "N_1" and "N_2", we may well prefer N_2 because other and/or more facts are mentioned in it than in N_1. However, it is not due to these facts themselves that we prefer N_2, but because the statements on these facts in N_2 provide us with a wider "scope" in respect of historical reality.

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6. It should be noted that I argued in Chapter IV for the falsity of narrative realism as a theory of historical writing. Moreover, the reductionist attempt to restrict historiography to historical research undoubtedly draws its inspiration from narrative realism. We may conclude that a historian taking seriously his narrative realism will tend to produce *subjective* narratios whose narrative meaning is obscured by an exaggerated emphasis on historical research.
7. See F. Venturi, *Utopia and reform in the Enlightenment*, Cambridge 1971.

Hence, we can say that facts may "(dis)confirm" a certain Ns but such a "(dis)confirmation" always runs via another Ns in which this fact *is* mentioned. Nevertheless, although we do compare Nss when we try to find the most objective narratio, *statements* make Nss into what they are. Therefore, the most successful historian is the historian who knows what parts of reality — when he describes them by means of statements on the past — will enable him to construct a narratio with a scope that is wider than the scopes of competing narratios.

Statements should be true, i.e. they should correspond with actual historical reality. Thus, when taking together the two components mentioned at the beginning of this section, we can claim the most objective narratio of a set of competing narratios to be the narratio whose statements 1) individuate the Ns in which the scope of the narrative beyond the descriptive meaning is relatively largest, and 2) all correspond to actual historical reality. The narratio that fulfils both these requirements is the most "daring" and "courageous" narratio. In such a narratio the epigraph of Popper's *Logic of scientific discovery:* "hypotheses are nets: only he who casts will catch" has been followed most assiduously.

The narrative idealist narratio being at a maximal distance from the kind of narratio favoured by narrative realists, it may rather easily be discarded and replaced by a new and more objective narratio. Indeed, since they suggest as much as possible while stating as little as possible such narrative idealist narratios might, in some respects, be likened to propaganda. The essential difference between the narrative idealist's "daring" narratio and propaganda is, however, that propaganda is supported only by the facts mentioned in its statements, while the narrative idealist historian has constructed his narratio in such a way that it is relatively hard to find the facts that "disconfirm" his narratio. An honest historian will propose his "daring" and "courageous" Ns while being convinced at the same time that it will *not* be swept away on account of a few aspects of the past he hasn't mentioned in his narratio. A propagandist does not have such scruples. He only wants to convince while it is the historian's aim to convince and to be nearest to the truth as well. Because the historian wants his Ns to "light up" with his Ns as large a part of the past as possible, there is every reason to label his historiography as more "objective" - or, as historians would prefer to say: nearer to the "truth" - than that of his colleague who shies off due to narrative realist misconceptions or than that which the propagandist wants to make us believe. Moreover, being aware of the vulnerability of the thesis on the past he defends, he will write down his narratio only after having struggled through Nss that mention facts he ultimately decides to leave out of his narratio. Indeed, the historian may be compared to a kind of Odysseus who has to steer between the Scylla of daring and the Charybdis of caution. When the historian's work is looked upon in that light, I think my claim that historiography should come as close as possible to propaganda will lose much of its provocativeness.

Once again I should perhaps warn against confusing the task of the philosopher with that of the historian. The philosopher is only permitted to say that the historian should maximalize the scope of his narratio beyond its descriptive content. But he cannot indicate how this should be achieved in actual historical practice. Nor is it his task to establish in individual cases which Nss have the largest relative scope. For this is and remains the domain of the historian and of historical discussion. And even for the historian it will be hard enough to answer such questions. The historian will be impeded above all by the fact that establishing the scope of a Ns cannot be done without considering other Nss on the same or related topics. For the scope of a Ns cannot be delimited in the absence of other Nss. Here the historian is in a much more awkward position than the scientist (although the gap between historian and scientist may be smaller if Lakatos's well-known views on the growth of scientific knowledge are true). In the sciences the relative merits of competing theories can in many, if not all cases be decided on by purely experimental means. In historiography things are different. The scope with which one credits some Ns is largely determined by what one has already read in the field of history. Anyone who is not versed in history will be quite helpless when he has to compare, for example, Voltaire's and Gouberts historiographies on Louis XIV. The fact that he understands each sentence of these narratios does not alter his predicament. This implies that disagreements between historians will remain with regard to the scope they credit individual Nss with. And these disagreements can largely be explained by the historiographical traditions to which individual historians belong, by what they have read, and so on. This is another argument in favour of the claim that the criteria of narrative objectivity will only enable us to decide on the *relative* merits of Nss. And even that is hard enough.

It is certainly disappointing that we can never know *how* to write objective historiography; we can only ascertain - and with difficulty at that — *that* one narratio is more objective than another. Nevertheless, our scope-maximalization criterion may at least show us which compass helps us to decide in this matter. And hitherto even this compass was unknown to the philosopher of history; although, of course, historians have always been guided by it in their appraisal of *completed* narratios. However, attempts to turn it into an instrument that will show us how to *cross* the seas of historical writing are doomed to failure. It often happens that we do have the criteria enabling us to find out whether a certain goal *has* been achieved or not, while we do not have the criteria or the rules indicating how to *reach* such a goal: these two kinds of criteria are often entirely different. We do have fairly reliable criteria to establish whether somebody *is* happy. But there are no such rules indicating how to *become* happy: finishing your book may do the trick in some cases — as it does in mine — but in others it may not.

CONCLUSION

In this study three fundamental theses have been defended. The first was that there are no translation-rules enabling us to "project" the past onto the narrative level of its historiographical representation; the narratio is therefore not a "picture" or "image" of the past, this thesis implies a critique of speculative philosophies of history and of all attempts to transform history into a social science. The translation-rules embodied in socio-scientific theories or models upon which the narrative realist bases his case can only be useful to the historian as long as he is doing historical research, but obfuscate the historian once he has reached the phase of integrating the findings of his historical research into an objective narratio. Because the CLM focuses our attention exclusively upon the regularities we know from daily life or from the social sciences, we may conclude that the CLM can only be meaningfully applied to the domain of historical research only and not to that of the narrative writing of history. Modern socio-scientific research into the past is a very useful ancillary science for historiography but can never be substituted for historiography itself. The attempt to do so only results in very subjective narratios; that is, narratios with a very narrow scope.

The second fundamental thesis was that the whole of a historian's narratio offers us a certain interpretation of the past and this interpretation is embodied in a Ns. In fact, this thesis amounts to an acceptance of the most essential tenets of historism: the "historische Ideen" or "historische Formen" that have interested historists so much may be identified with the Nss whose nature has been analyzed in this study. Historism has been criticized for different reasons. On the methodological level the historist's demand that historical phenomena should always be placed in and understood from the context of a unique process of historical change has been said to eliminate the possibility of reliable historical knowledge. It is impossible to infer a unique historical phenomenon from a unique historical context and vice versa: to make reliable inferences requires general knowledge of what either these historical phenomena or the historical context in which they are embedded can possibly be related to. However, as soon as we realize that historical uniqueness should always be associated with narrative things and not with things in historical reality, this criticism loses its point. Not what is explained but what explains is "unique". What is unique in a narratio is not the aspects of the subject-matter under discussion, but the way these aspects are integrated or "colligated" into one Ns. This argument also enables us to defend historism against its most pertinent criticism. Political conclusions have been drawn from historist investigations of the past[1]. But historism should only be interpreted as a philosophical theory explaining how narrative

1. Historism has been much criticized for the political conclusions its seemed to support. See Iggers (1) and M.C. Brands, *Historisme als ideologie,* Assen 1965.

knowledge of the past is possible and what its nature is. How we should act in the future is quite a different problem from how to integrate narrative statements on the past into an objective narratio. Historists could only formulate their political exhortations because they interpreted the consistency of a narratio as if the past related in this narratio was *itself* pointing in a certain direction. But an objective and consistent narratio is the achievement of a historian and not an indication of the future path that will be followed by history itself. Therefore, when historism is cleansed of its metaphysical accretions, it will no longer give occasion to political conclusions. To summarize, this study can be seen as a plea for a historist philosophy of history, which is supported by the fact that nearly all the historiography written by modern and older historians is consonant with historist assumptions.

The third fundamental thesis demonstrated the similarity between metaphorical statements and narratios. Both metaphorical statements and narratios define a "point of view" from which we are invited to see reality. The "point of view" expresses a preference for a specific selection of the statements that can be made on (historical) reality. The totality of these statements constitutes the "scope" of the metaphorical statement or of the narratio. Because the truth or falsity of these statements is not asserted in the narratio itself, we have concluded that there is an essential difference between theories or general theoretical statements and the "theories" or interpretations of the past proposed by the historian. Since all action requires a "point of view" as meant in this study — meaningful action always presupposing a conception of how to continue our personal or group-history in the future — this distinction runs parallel to that between theoretical and practical knowledge. In fact, historical knowledge is not knowledge in the proper sense of the word; it is better characterized as an *arrangement* of knowledge. What makes historical knowledge philosophically such an interesting phenomenon lies in the fact that it is always concerned with the question of *what* we should or should not say on reality and not with *how* we should speak about reality (the domain of the sciences). This question is always closely connected with "practical" considerations or, as Foucault has shown, with the exercise of power: "once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power. There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to describe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory"[2]. What we decide to say on reality largely determines how we wish to act on it. Increasing the scope of the narratio as much as possible is a necessary condition for producing "objective" narratios. The formal structure of statements on Nss (the predicates of such statements can be analytically

2. M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* New York 1980; p. 69.

derived from the complete notion of its subject) obliges us to accept explanations of the past that are couched in terms of Nss[3].

In pleading the necessity of postulating the concept "narrative substance" I have introduced various philosophical topics. It might be argued that these topics should have been analyzed separately. However, the concept "narrative substance" owes much of its plausibility to the fact that it has proved to be quite useful to us in our investigation of so many different topics. In a sense the concept "narrative substance" is like an auxiliary line in geometry: we conceive of it because it enables us to solve so many otherwise intractable problems. The introduction of a diversity of philosophical problems is therefore not to be regarded as a flaw in the present investigation, but as an essential part of it. Only in this way could the central idea of this book, i.e. the concept "narrative substance", be satisfactorily explained and argued for.

In the course of our inquiry only one substantial assumption has been made, viz. that historians describe the past with the help of singular constative statements. Because no restrictions have been made as to the content of these statements, the results of my analysis may also have some bearing upon fields of investigation other than historiography. For instance, if it is true that during periods of scientific revolution not just different descriptions of the same phenomena but different "paradigms" are constrasted with one another, science comes close to history in such a phase of its development. Perhaps it is not unreasonable to say that the relative breadth of their scope is the decisive criterion for the

3. For each of these three fundamental theses support can be found in Huizinga's theoretical writings. The first thesis may be compared with Huizinga's assertion that there is no "es" corresponding with the "es" in Ranke's dictum that the historian should represent the past "wie es eigentlich gewesen" (Huizinga, p. 44). His inaugural lecture *Het aesthetisch bestanddeel van geschiedkundige voorstellingen* amply testifies to his awareness of the gap between the past and narrative accounts of the past thanks to the historian's aesthetical grasp of the past (Huizinga; pp. 3-39). Our second thesis finds its counterpart in what Huizinga wrote on the "historical forms" or "historical ideas" (Huizinga, pp. 69—85, 134—150). Thirdly, the metaphorical character of the narratio has been expressed by Huizinga in the following poetic way: "historical knowing is hardly ever tantamount to indicating a strict causality. It is always the understanding of an 'interrelatedness' ('samenhang'). This interrelatedness is always, as we argued, an open one; that is to say, it should never be thought of as the links forming a chain but rather as a bundle loosely tied together, to which new twigs may be added as long as the string reaches. Even more appropriate would be the image of a bunch of wild flowers. Because of their variety and their different values each new notion added to the conception of a historical interrelatedness has an effect similar to that of a new flower added to the bouquet, each changing the aspect of the whole bunch" (Huizinga (2); p. 56). To put the same point in our own terminology: each new statement added to a narratio modifies the point of view from which the past (as described by the other statements of the narratio) should be seen. Like the flowers of the bouquet, the statements of a narratio determine one another's narrative meaning.
In my personal opinion, Huizinga's theoretical writings contain the best analysis of the nature of historical knowledge available as yet.

fruitfulness of individual scientific "paradigms". But normal science and history have little in common: normal science deals with *predicates* and historiography deals with *statements.*

On the other side of the spectrum of human experience narrative philosophy may have its value as well. The way the mind synthesizes sensory perceptions could very well have more in common with the historical than with the ("normal") scientific approach to reality. The fact that the concept of our selfidentity (i.e. the Ns I_{int}"), into which all our sensory perceptions are integrated, is a narrative concept, speaks strongly in favour of this conjecture. The essential difference between robots or computers and human beings lies, in my opinion, in the capacity of human beings to constitute the Ns " I_{int}"- The possibiliy of artificial intelligence probably depends to a considerable degree upon the question as to whether one can make computers use the word " I_{int}". The trouble is that one cannot *teach* computers how to use this word, for here regularities, guides or instructions cannot be called upon. Whoever uses the word I_{int}" has not learned to identify a specific individual thing in reality: he has acquired the philosophical insight that solipsism can be lived but cannot consistently be thought. This is not merely an academic matter: the all-pervasive anti-narrativism of the 20th century mental climate[4] strongly stimulates solipsism. And solipsism is an ailment that may take a long time to be discovered: it never comes into conflict with reality.

4. See A.Macintyre, *After virtue*, London 1981; passim.

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